THE

MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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SIGNS OF THE TIMES

The Alliance of the Reactionaries.

'The troublesome history of the Church of England,' to use Augustine Birrell's phrase, has a distressing way of repeating itself, due no doubt to the fact that historic corporations possess a psychology no less strongly marked than that of individuals. In 1860, following on the publication of *Essays and Reviews* (the opening Essay of which was written by Frederick Temple), petitions, appeals, memorials, signed by English ecclesiastics, expressing sorrow, alarm, horror, detestation, were presented to the authorities of the Church praying for action, and action of the most drastic kind, against the Essayists. Owing to the wisdom of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, the torrent of fanatical emotion was checked. In the last resort, all the Essayists escaped penalization and the most notable of them became, in due time, Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1914, in the six months preceding the War, another ecclesiastical storm (known as the Kikuyu controversy) disturbed the peace of our Church. This was caused, not only by the increasing influence of the teaching of Liberal or Modernist Churchmen, but also by the practical Liberal policy of that great headmaster, John Percival, Bishop of Hereford, who was eventually excommunicated by Frank Weston, the saintly Bishop of Zanzibar. Curiously enough, on this occasion one of the most

influential leaders of the attack on the Modernists was Bishop Gore, who himself some years before, as the editor of *Lux Mundi*, had been widely condemned in Church circles for being a protagonist for the use of the methods of Higher Criticism in the study of the Bible.

Again petitions, very numerously signed by clergymen, were presented to Convocation. Among these petitions, 'obviously the weightiest of the memorials presented,' as Archbishop Davidson described it, was the petition of a group of Modernist scholars, barely forty in number. As this memorial, although nearly a quarter of a century old, embodies principles which the Modern Churchmen's Union still strives to propagate, but which are even yet very imperfectly apprehended by the Church as a whole, we reprint it here.

'I. We regard it as a matter of grave importance that the clergy should be encouraged to study and discuss reverently and freely the critical and historical problems which are forced upon the modern student of the Old and New Testaments, to publish the result of their studies, and to face the task of interpreting and restating the traditional doctrines of Christianity in such ways as may be demanded by newly-discovered truth.

'II. While asserting without reserve our belief in the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we submit that a wide liberty of belief should be allowed with regard to the mode and attendant circumstances of both.

'III. We believe that real study, thought, and discussion will be discouraged if clergymen, who, in matters not affecting the essential truth of Christianity, arrive at conclusions which are opposed to traditional or momentarily dominant opinions, are to be removed from their offices or denounced as dishonest for retaining them. We venture to recall to your Lordships the dictum of Archbishop Temple, *"If the conclusions are prescribed, the study is precluded."*

'IV. We dutifully and respectfully pray your Lordships to remember how often in the past, when the Episcopate or the Convocations have attempted to pronounce authoritatively upon scientific, critical, or historical questions, they have committed themselves to positions which are now by practically universal consent admitted to be untenable.'

In 1938 the publication of the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine, entitled *Doctrine in the Church of England*, has in its turn produced a similar ecclesiastical storm, not less widespread than the earlier storms but certainly less typhonic in its violence than that of 1860. As a consequence of that Report, the following petition was recently sent out for signature to all the clergy of the Province of Canterbury:

WHEREAS much distress and perplexity have recently been caused to the faithful Clergy and laity of the Church of England by published statements which tend to impair the doctrinal standards of its scriptural and credal orthodoxy:

We, the undersigned members of the Clergy of this Province, desire solemnly and publicly to reaffirm to you the assent given by us at our ordination to the truths (1) of the Virginal Conception of our Lord Jesus Christ by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost, and of His Incarnation thereby of the substance of the Virgin Mary His Mother, without seed of man; (2) of His Bodily Resurrection from the tomb on the third day; and (3) of His Ascension in the Risen Body to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Further, in view of the Recall to Religion and the many indications of the clamant need for certitude in matters of faith, we note with all the graver concern that the inerrancy in spiritual things which belongs to the Incarnate Son of God is being impugned by much modern teaching.

THEREFORE WE HUMBLY PRAY your Venerable Houses to declare for the comfort of your petitioners and the faithful people committed to their charge:—

(1) That the doctrine set forth in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion remains the authoritative teaching of the Church of England.

(2) That the Church of England holds and teaches the Nicene Creed in that sense only in which it has ever been held throughout the history of the Church, and that her ministers cannot rightly claim a liberty to set aside by private interpretation the historic meaning of those clauses which state the events of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accompanying the petition was a covering letter requesting signatures signed by

C. M. Chavasse, Chairman, Oxford Evangelical Conference.
C. R. Deakin, Chairman, Executive Committee, Church Union.
T. W. Gilbert, Chairman, National Church League.
H. W. Hinde, Chairman, Executive Committee, Central Evangelical Council.
E. D. Merritt, Chairman, Federation of Catholic Priests.
W. B. O'Brien, Superior-General, Society of St. John the Evangelist, Oxford.

These signatures naturally carried great weight as they represent the alliance of the Fundamentalist-Evangelicals and the Traditionalist-Anglo-Catholics against Modernism. As a consequence, the petition has been very widely signed, receiving 6,338 clerical signatures.

Although this combination against Modernism of clerics drawn from opposing camps testifies to the centrality of Modernism within the Church of England, and may be even regarded

as an augury of the future triumph of modernist ideals within that Church, yet the number of signatures which the petition has received should demonstrate to all the urgent need for raising the level of religious education among large masses of our parochial clergy.

Whilst all responsible Modernists realize the importance of the continuity of Christian thought and the need from age to age of maintaining loyalty to the great centralities of the Christian faith, they are compelled to feel that the petition both in its terminology and in its outlook practically denies faith in the ever-present guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not surprising that the petition gives the impression of stubbornly ignoring the truth which the Spirit in this age has been seeking to teach the Church in the spheres of Biblical Criticism and the development of Christian doctrine. The attempt, at this time of day, to secure a declaration from our bishops that the Church of England 'holds and teaches the Nicene Creed in that sense only in which it has ever been held throughout the history of the Church,' is to exhibit a most extraordinary misunderstanding of the true lessons to be learned from the history of Christianity. The history of Christian doctrine teaches clearly that whilst the essence of Christian faith has been held fast throughout the Christian ages, the forms of Christian thought and the methods of Christian interpretation have constantly changed. And we must expect a continuance of such changes in the future if the Christian faith is to adjust itself influentially to the moral and spiritual needs of our enlarging human experience.

A similar petition was also circulated in the Province of York with a similar covering letter, but signed by C. C. Bell, Precentor of York and Canon Residentiary; A. G. Bernard, Vicar of Emmanuel, Everton, and Hon. Canon of Liverpool; E. W. Mowll, Provost of Bradford; and M. R. Newbolt, Canon Residentiary of Chester.

The Bishops stand by the Doctrinal Report.

On June 1, the petition of the allied Fundamentalist-Evangelicals and Traditionalist-Anglo-Catholics was presented by the Bishop of Ely to the Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury and secured that judicious reception which it was

anticipated would be its fate. The bishops stood firmly by the Doctrinal Report and commended that Report to the Church of England, urging that it should be widely studied by all Church people in a spirit of open-minded devotion to truth and sympathy towards tradition. The bishops also re-affirmed, as they were bound to re-affirm, that the doctrine of the Church of England is 'the doctrine set forth in the Creeds, in the Prayer-book, and in the Articles of Religion.'

The episcopal reception of the petition was embodied in the following resolution moved by Dr. Rawlinson, Bishop of Derby, seconded by Dr. Parsons, Bishop of Southwark, and carried unanimously:

> That this House welcomes the report of the Commission on Doctrine, published under the title 'Doctrine in the Church of England,' as a survey of the currents of thought and belief within the Church, a statement of the agreement and disagreement actually existing, and a contribution to the understanding and appreciation of one another on the part of those who differ; recognises that the report neither is nor claims to be a declaration of the doctrine of the Church — a purpose lying outside the Commission's terms of reference, and one for which no Commission appointed as this was could be competent; desires that the report may be widely studied in that spirit of open-minded devotion to truth and readiness to learn from every tradition of Christian thought which is characteristic of the report itself. Further, inasmuch as many have misunderstood the function of the Commission as explained above, this House, while recognising the reality of the problems which scholars and theologians are handling and desiring to maintain in the Church the fullest freedom of inquiry which is compatible with spiritual fellowship, thinks it well to state that the doctrine of the Church of England is now, as it has been in past time, the doctrine set forth in the Creeds, in the Prayer-book, and in the Articles of Religion.

On June 2nd, the Upper House of the Convocation of York followed the lead of the Upper House of Canterbury. On June 3rd, the Lower Houses of both Provinces debated the same issue but came to opposing conclusions. The Northern House approved a resolution moved by the Dean of York welcoming the Report of the Doctrinal Commission. The Southern House passed a motion humbly requesting the Upper House to express itself further in the matter of Church Doctrine in accordance with the terms of the recent petition presented to it. As the Upper House of Canterbury is not in the least likely to express itself further in accordance with the terms of this motion we may regard the matter as satisfactorily settled.

Dr. Kirk and the Virgin Birth.

Dr. Kenneth Kirk, the recently appointed Bishop of Oxford, selected the Virgin Birth as the theme for his address to his first Diocesan Conference. The address is published in full in the *Oxford Diocesan Magazine* (June, pp. 161-171). Dr. Kirk is highly appreciated in Anglo-Catholic circles as a brilliant and persuasive exponent of Catholic theology and ethics. We regret, however, in view of the harmonizing spirit reflected in the Doctrinal Report, that Dr. Kirk should have felt compelled to select such a controversial theme for his address since his conclusions were of a painfully divisive character. We cite the last conclusion first:

> 'I have no hesitation in saying to any priest who denies the doctrine of the Virgin Birth or asserts it to be of no importance that I believe his conscience to be in error when it allows him to continue his ministry on such terms. I have no hesitation in asserting that his denial of the doctrine is subversive of fundamental Christian truth, and that only want of logic prevents him from recognising this for himself' (p. 170).

We had thought, so far as our English Episcopate is concerned, that this attitude towards those who cannot believe in either the importance or the historicity of the Virgin Birth was extinct. That the newest of our bishops should assert it, is, at least for Modernists, depressing.

Dr. Kirk's uncompromising attitude arises from his conviction that the Virgin Birth is a 'cardinal doctrine, 'a necessary item,' of the Christian Faith — a quite impossible conclusion to justify historically.*

In much that Dr. Kirk says in criticism of Modernist disbelief there is nothing new. Where however we do detect a note of novelty in his attack is that he charges those Modernists who deny the historicity of the Virgin Birth with refusing to study seriously the historical evidence for it.

> 'It can be asserted that few, if any, of those who deny the Virgin Birth have really faced the historical evidence fairly and responsibly. That evidence . . . when both its direct and indirect lines are taken into account, is beyond doubt very weighty. I could have understood it if the sceptic were to say, "The historical evidence is indeed im-

* See Dean Armitage Robinson's Open Letter to Archbishop Davidson on this point cited at the conclusion of our article 'Four Views of the Nativity,' published in this issue.

pressive, nevertheless on other grounds I must deny the doctrine." But so far from this being commonly said, the question of the historical evidence is almost always dismissed as unimportant and irrelevant . . .'

Dr. Kirk produces no evidence in support of this amazing charge. For many Modernists it is the weak and conflicting character of the historical evidence for the Virgin Birth which has proved a decisive factor in their rejection of it.

Dr. Kirk presented to the Conference a brief *resumé* of the historical evidence for the Virgin Birth which contained some really extraordinary statements. He informed the Conference :

> 'To none can it [the Virgin Birth] have appeared a fulfilment of prophecy, for it is agreed that the sixth chapter of *Isaiah* was not as yet interpreted as requiring that Messiah should be born of a virgin.'

We cannot discover any reference to the Virgin Birth in *Isaiah* vi. Surely the Bishop must be referring to *Isaiah* vii, 14, and the fact that Matthew (possibly the first to record the Virgin Birth) could write :

> 'Now all this is come to pass, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, Behold the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son' (*Mt.* i, 22, 23)

would seem to indicate that at least by the compiler of the First Gospel, if not by a number of his contemporaries, the Virgin Birth was regarded as a fulfilment of *Isaiah* vii, 14, according to the Septuagint.

We are glad to note in Dr. Kirk's pronouncement, a point in which he surpasses in a modernist direction one of the greatest of his predecessors in the See of Oxford. Dr. Gore did believe in disciplinary measures against clergymen who denied the Virgin Birth. Dr. Kirk does not believe in such action. He said in answer to the question 'What attitude should the Church adopt towards one of its ministers who denies the truth of the doctrine?' :

> 'I believe it to be my duty to use every reasonable opportunity, whether in public or private, to challenge his opinions: to point out their incoherences and inadequacies: and to expound what to my mind are beyond doubt the verities of the matter. But I believe that I should be doing the Church a disservice were I to attempt to set in motion the processes of ecclesiastical discipline against him. It is foolish to make men martyrs for a mistaken belief, because it merely commends a cause which otherwise has little or nothing to commend it : and the vitality of the Church of England to-day derives in no small measure from the fact that it has discerned this principle.'

Dr. Headlam and the Modern Churchmen's Union.

On the occasion of the recent formation of a branch of the Modern Churchmen's Union in the Diocese of Gloucester, the Bishop, Dr. Headlam, wrote in his Diocesan Magazine (May):

> 'I was informed recently that it was proposed to establish a branch of the Modern Churchmen's Union in the Diocese. I should like to take this opportunity of saying that I disapprove of all party organisations — whether Anglo-Catholic or Evangelical or Modernist, the Church Union, the Church Association and the many kindred bodies, and the Modern Churchmen's Union — and I hope very much that the clergy in the Diocese will take no part in any of them.'

This episcopal injunction called forth the following reasoned reply from the Council of the Modern Churchmen's Union:

> 'The Council wishes to assure your Lordship that the meetings of the Union and its branches are open to clergy and laity of all opinions, and freedom of discussion is not only permitted but welcomed.
>
> 'The democratic peoples have evolved the machinery of party for the resolution of differences in higher syntheses and for the securing of peaceful and reasonably gradual change together with continuity. The alternative in both Church and State must be autocracy.
>
> 'The Council would take this opportunity of expressing to your Lordship their concern at the growing tendency to some measure of episcopal autocracy in the Church of England at the present time. It will be a grievous day for our Church, and ultimately for the principle of episcopacy, when men and women who are convinced that change and reform are necessary may only organize themselves as a group to obtain their ends at the cost of incurring the displeasure of the constituted authorities of the Church.'
>
> (Signed) Cyril Norwood (*President*), R. B. Henderson (*Chairman*), T. J. Wood (*Secretary*).

Whilst we are conscious that church societies may contribute to the spirit of sectarian partizanship in the Church, and that all members of church societies should consciously guard against this danger, we have to recognize that an enormous amount of good work in the Church has been accomplished by these associations of the like-minded. Indeed it is not the Church's official leaders who have been responsible for its most influential and many-sided endeavours, but various voluntary organizations, many of which might be described as party organizations. Every church society, therefore, must be judged by its aims and the means and methods used to achieve those ends. It is not to be condemned simply because it is a party organization.

We venture to think that the aims of the Modern Churchmen's Union are of such a kind as to deserve approbation and support. Those aims, if attained, should promote the comprehensiveness of our Church and secure the elimination of obscurantism, fanaticism and intolerance. They should thus be the means of strengthening the influence of Christian principles in every sphere of our national life. We cannot claim that our society during the last forty years has made no mistakes, but on the whole it has been true to the ideals and spirit of its founders. We do not wish to claim for ourselves more than is just, but when the history of the Church of England for this period comes to be written it will be recognized that the members of the Modern Churchmen's Union, as a whole, have played no inconsiderable part in promoting, not only theological progress, but a better mutual understanding between opposing ecclesiastical parties. This, we are glad to observe, is the view taken by the *Guardian* (May 6) in commenting on Dr. Headlam's action :

> 'There are many organizations that do little but exacerbate party feelings. But there are others, among them, we should have thought, the Modern Churchmen's Union, which by cutting across old party opinions are free from the gross taints of sectarianism. It would be a pity if organizations which promote intelligent discussion and are sources of wholesome criticism were condemned because they are in a strict sense "parties," but hardly partisan.'

The objection to the formation of ecclesiastical societies in the Church of England is not a new one. The Preface to the second edition of Nelson's *Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England*, published in 1704, contains a reasoned statement in defence of the creation of religious societies in the Church of that period :

> 'I cannot apprehend but that they must be very serviceable to the Interest of Religion, and may contribute very much to revive that true Spirit of Christianity which was so much the Glory of the Primitive Times. And I see no reason why Men may not meet and consult together, to improve one another in Christian Knowledge, and by mutual Advice take measures how best to farther their own Salvation, as well as promote that of their Neighbours: when the same Liberty is taken for the Improvement of Trade, and for carrying on the Pleasures and Diversions of Life. And if at such Meetings they shall voluntarily subscribe any certain Sums to be disposed of in such Charities as shall seem most proper to the Majority of their Members, I cannot imagine how this can deserve Censure, when the liberal Contributions of Gentlemen to support a Horse Race or a Musick Meeting, have never been taxed with the least Illegality' (p. x *f.*).

THE DOCTRINAL COMMISSION REPORT AND CHRISTIAN REUNION

By Professor L. DE C. RICHARDSON.

THE terms of reference of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England were essentially terms of unity. They run as follows:

> 'To consider the nature and grounds of Christian Doctrine with a view to demonstrating the extent of existing agreement within the Church of England and with a view to investigating how far it is possible to remove or diminish existing differences.'

This task the Commission has carried out preeminently by two methods. Their Report:

Firstly: avoids ambiguity. (It records many opinions but in a deliberate order, in clear words, and for a clear purpose; and nearly everywhere it avoids self-contradiction.).

It even avoids excessive technicalities, or subtleties, at least in the earlier and weightier half—for it addresses itself to the average man of decent culture, interest and intelligence. It may be worth while to notice that in these respects the Report has been unfairly judged. A leading article in the *Times*, written on the Report's first appearance and with, as I thought, ironical purport, quoted from page 13 (given there as page 3): 'We are not writing chiefly for the general public,' etc., and from page 24: 'Our Report has not been composed primarily for expert theologians.' It drew attention to this contradiction, but omitted to quote the statement, earlier than either of these, given in the Chairman's Introduction on page 6:

> 'Our task has been, so far as we are able, to discuss the unchanging truths of the Christian Revelation, and the various interpretations of these current in the Church of England, in such a way as to be intelligible to those of our contemporaries who have some acquaintance with theology.'

Secondly: With each discordant opinion, the Report mentions the reasons given by those who hold it; thereby offering much material for thought and study and setting an example of the best method of ascertaining truth.

As a reward of their method, the Commission are able to

register a large measure of agreement in English Churchmen's doctrinal views setting forth agreed basic *principles* on the various subjects discussed. Let me quote some of the most far reaching :

General :

> 'We no longer regard precedents, as such, as decisive for all time. Their authority depends upon the principles which they embody, and upon the conformity of those principles to the mind of Christ' (pp. 117-118).

On the Bible :

> 'The tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible commonly held in the Church until the beginning of the nineteenth century (though often held in association with allegorical or other interpretations which profoundly modified its significance) cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal' (p. 29).
>
> 'Belief that the Bible is the inspired record of God's self-revelation to man and of man's response to that revelation is not for us a dogma imposed as a result of some theory of the mode of the composition of the books, but a conclusion drawn from the character of their contents and the spiritual insight displayed in them' (p. 27).

On the Teaching of Our Lord :

> '. . . When all allowance is made for possible divergences between the records as they stand and the historic facts behind them, it remains true that the religious and moral teaching of the Gospel conveys faithfully the impress made upon the Apostolic Church by the mind and personality of Jesus, and thus possesses supreme authority' (p. 33).

And on another page :

> 'It is not, therefore, of necessity illegitimate to accept and affirm particular clauses of the Creeds while understanding them in this symbolic sense. It is, however, in any case essential to hold that the facts underlying the Gospel story—which story the Creeds summarise and interpret—were such as to justify the Gospel itself' (p. 38).

On the Anglican Formularies :

> 'These formularies should not be held to prejudice questions which have arisen since their formulation or problems which have been modified by fresh knowledge or fresh conceptions' (p. 37).

On Grace :

> 'The operation of Grace is not opposed to the freedom of the human will, since Grace acts through the will and not externally to it. It is, indeed, only within the sphere of Grace that true freedom is to be found.'

and :

> 'It is essential to emphasise the spiritual character of Grace, and in view of this physical metaphors, though admittably inevitable, should be used with clear recognition of their metaphorical character' (p. 53).

On the CHURCH:

> 'There is no doubt that in the Bible and in Christian tradition the action of God through a Community is emphasised, and we start accordingly from this point of view' (p. 100).
>
> '. . . the Church's own essential nature as the fellowship of those who have received the Gospel and are called to bear witness to it . . .' (p. 112).
>
> 'It is clear that (this) fundamental unity ought to be expressed in the visible unity of the Church on earth. Such full outward expression would involve unity in the declaration of a common faith, in proclamation of the Gospel and in the offering of worship, and all members of Christ on earth would be in visible communion with one another; differences in the interpretation of the Faith and in forms of worship are inevitable, but such differences would be recognised as differences within the one Body; they would not interfere with the bond of peace, of which sacramental unity is the outward sign' (p. 107).

It will be seen from the quotations which I have chosen how very far this Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Doctrine in the Church of England goes to establish grounds on which unity can be achieved, not only within the Church of England but among nearly all Christian bodies as they now exist in separation. For its most valuable service is seen to be this, *i.e.* that its findings automatically put first things first. And it is in all that is truly fundamental, that agreement emerges.

We can understand why this should be so.

For Doctrine is but the interpretation of experience:

(*a*) experience, as the general, collective experience of facts, in what is known as History; and

(*b*) experience as the life of the individual soul;

and with regard to Christianity, through all our varieties of belief and formulation all Christians have in common both these types of experience. Thus:

(*a*) Whatever extremist disruptive conclusions may be reached concerning the Gospel narratives as we have them, the Figure of One still emerges from them, so far from the capacity of his contemporaries to invent, that each of the Canonical Gospels represents Him with a different bias and yet each, in its truthfulness, shows us also elements incompatible with its own picture or at least foreign to it; and after all these centuries, and with Christian communities among all races, we still have not exhausted the understanding of that Figure. We have the inestimable advantage of a religion founded by a

Person, at a given place and time; God spake, in the fulness of time, through One Whom we *know*—although we cannot now, and never shall be able to, understand Him fully, yet *know*—enough to attempt to follow Him.

(*b*) And this personal experience of following Him we also share, as we share its Model, and His grace for the following.

Our fundamental Doctrines are *explanations* of ascertained facts; and where we differ in the explanation, there yet remains a ground of unity among us in the *facts* themselves. The Life and death and risen life again of Jesus Christ, forced us into a formulation of Trinitarian doctrine (pp. 79 and 97); and earlier still, into Christological statements (pp. 72-76); the experience of Redemption, into doctrines of Atonement (p. 91); the commemoration of the Last Supper in the Eucharist, and the experience of its Grace, into one or other of the many shades of affirmation of a real spiritual presence of Jesus with us in that Sacrament.

Can we not be content to accept the facts, which we all share, and leave each other to differ in the explanations? The Church of England, is, I believe, ideally the nearest of the Churches to what Christ would have a Church be, because she does within such wide limits allow this latitude. If only we could preserve charity, our differences would be enrichments of the common treasury, and not 'unhappy divisions.'

Seen from this angle, the degree of agreement even in Doctrine, within the Church of England, which the Doctrinal Commission Report shows, deepens into a unity of Christian life in Discipleship. And this we can and do share also with all other Christians of all denominations: with all and each, whatever their intellectual interpretations of it. We all have in common those things that take their name from the Lord: the Lord's Name—the Lord's Day—the Lord's Prayer—and, under varying forms, the Lord's Supper. In the realm of life and action, we could, then, declare the unity of all Christians at once, if we chose. As F. J. A. Hort said long ago, in his Hulsean Lectures published under the title of *The Way The Truth The Life*,

> 'In what concerns the relation of things divine to men, error lies mainly in attempts to render wholly explicable what is but partly

apprehensible: and especially in the use of images drawn from lower rather than from higher human relations and transactions' (p. 187 of the 1897 edition).

In this Report much is left open, even of matters concerning which the Commission's Second Chairman, His Grace the Archbishop of York, in an 'avowedly individual and Personal' (I am quoting his words) introduction, pronounces his own strong opinion. The unanimous signatories of the Report evidently felt deeply what is stated by their Chairman briefly on page 1, and is repeated in the General Introduction subscribed by all, in words which I will quote:

> 'If God is Love, it is only among people animated by mutual love that understanding of Him can be advanced. To admit acrimony in theological discussions is in itself more fundamentally heretical than any erroneous opinions upheld or condemned in the course of the discussion' (p. 23).

What Kind of unity, then, could we achieve at once? Organic unity; each group of Christians being as a member of the one living Body, whose master and whose soul is Christ.

There is already in being much co-operation among us in action and in non-sacramental worship. Surely this generation is called to put first things first—truth, love, and brotherhood, before theology; and thus, to add intercommunion, full, reciprocal and normal, among all Christians.

Concerning English Churchpeople, the Doctrinal Commission's Report states:

> '. . . it is . . . important to make it clear that what causes division of theological opinion in the Church of England is not any question concerning the real and spiritual presence of the living Christ at every Eucharist (for this is acknowledged by all), but only the questions whether and in what way that presence is to be specially associated with the consecrated bread and wine' (p. 168).

Were it not for the trouble about 'validity' of Orders there would be no difficulty in extending true intercommunion to all Christians now. It is a notable fact that our divisions, and the dissentions and subtleties of the Commission's Report, practically all centre in the subjects of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments. That true Christians should differ most of all on these subjects seems to me in itself a proof that they are of secondary importance. Surely, no one can seriously maintain that if the Lord were walking on this earth visibly to-day *He*

would divide us into separate groups and forbid intercommunion. And if He would not, how *dare* we? I wish I could convey to you how deeply many of us feel these exclusions and fencings-about to be APOSTASY; how artificial and remote ecclesiastical preoccupations with modes and formulae seem to most of the laity. What are now liturgical vestments were once the best clothes of ordinary people: the same process of crystallisation is invading ecclesiastical views of issues once living; and the rift between men and their Churches is very largely caused by the unreality of these issues to-day, although the Churches' authorities are allowing them to loom so large. The Doctrinal Commission's Report, with the best of intentions, yet fails sadly in this respect. And so does the Scheme for Reunion issued to the Houses of Convocation and then to the general public lately. The last thing that we want, at a moment when leadership is already so scarce, is that Bishops should become elective and that a Church Assembly also elective and its Moderator, should become the supreme authorities! Uniformity is neither possible at present, nor desirable; and the desire to obtain it only sacrifices Christian essentials. Already Dr. Anderson Scott, a leading Presbyterian, and a delegate to the World Conference on Faith and Order, held in Edinburgh last summer, has told the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England that after nearly forty years' experience of service in that movement he does not feel that it is any longer worth their while to continue a conference whose object is a union which would include the Church of England.

> 'No one who has any kind of intimate knowledge of that Church and of the difficulties can for one moment dream that within measureable distance of time the Church of England could be induced to join in any real union with the Free Churches except on the condition of submission' (*Guardian*, May 20th, 1938, p. 329).

I know the arguments about Tradition. But Tradition and Church Order cannot be given equality with that for which alone they exist, *i.e.* the ascertainable core of Christianity. If they should seem to necessitate action that is at variance with Christ's own teaching and example they must be tested by these, and by that test alone rejected or allowed. Christians least of all should be tempted to put tradition against God's new call—knowing what the Sanhedrin did, on the same principles, 2,000

years ago. In New Testament times the Christian Church was one, yet varied in organisation, ritual and approach. Can we not preserve the riches of the Christian tradition bestowed on us since then and yet re-establish the unity of our discipleship?

Reunion will mean the passing into second line of matters that with the growth of the Christian Society rose long ago into importance. It will present itself to some in the form of negation. But let us remember that all great affirmations bring negations with them. Many will recollect Milton's lovely Ode to the Nativity, and its description of how the heathen gods are scattered at the coming of the Babe. They, and divine oracles and nymphs and naiads, had served their purpose one day; but a Greater than they had come. And when perennial plants renew their foliage, who goes treasuring the past year's leaves that the great affirmation of Life in their new growth casts out? With other trees, indeed, there is even a period of barrenness—but even their negation is the triumphant affirmation of Life.

The Life of the Christian Church is showing itself to-day in the call to follow in action the truth which we are seeing more and more clearly and to which the Doctrinal Commission's Report bears witness, *i.e.* that discipleship is deeper than any intellectual formulation, wider than any sectional loyalty. I am sure that I interpret the feelings of the vast majority of the laity when I beseech you to apply this truth in a corporate reunion that will not wait for further Doctrinal agreements.

And now I would add my plea for another point which is also closely connected with our position to-day. No Commission or Council of Inquiry attempting to discover the causes for the widening rift between Church and People can give you more than you yourselves can see if you will only examine the situation with candour. It is essential, before the Christian message can touch the people at large, that the language of the Church's services and of your exhortations should represent in its plain and ordinary sense the things that we really mean.

With the relations between Church and People grown closer, corporate reunion will, I am sure, also become immeasurably easier. It remains for the Church of England to show that below all our divisions 'Christ is the underlying unity,' and that at His Table we can all gather in brotherhood.

FOUR VIEWS OF THE NATIVITY

By The Editor.

THERE are four views extant of the parentage of Jesus Christ, and we propose to present them in the chronological order of their appearance, summarizing and weighing very briefly the evidence for and against the historicity of each view.

I.

The view enshrined in the earliest documents of the New Testament is that Jesus Christ was the son of Joseph and Mary of Nazareth.

(1) In the account of the visit of Jesus with His disciples to Nazareth contained in all three Synoptists,[1] the Nazarenes, as they listen to Him in the synagogue, ask a rhetorical question which they answer in the affirmative. This question appears in three forms in the Revised Version. In *Matthew* xiii, 55, it is 'Is not this the son of the carpenter?' In *Luke* iv, 22 it is 'Is not this the son of Joseph?' In *Mark* vi, 2 it is 'Is not this the carpenter?' But in a number of ancient codices it appears as 'Is not this the son of the carpenter?' and Origen (the greatest scholar of the primitive Christian Church), in confuting Celsus, wrote:

> 'Jesus Himself has nowhere been described as a carpenter in the Gospels current in the Churches.'

These facts suggest that the oldest text of *Mark* had 'the son of the carpenter,' from which *Matthew* derived it (*Mt.* xiii, 55).

(2) Both *Matthew* and *Luke* contain genealogies of Jesus. These genealogies differ in many respects and apologists have made great efforts to harmonize them, but in vain. New Testament scholarship to-day is agreed on one point with regard to the two genealogies: that both of them were originally composed, among other things, to prove that Jesus is of Davidic descent, and that they are therefore genealogies of Joseph, who

[1] *Mk.* vi, 1-8; *Mt.* xiii, 53-58; *Lk.* iv, 16-30. *Matthew* makes use of *Mark* as his source, but *Luke* uses *L.*

is a scion of the House of David. In *Matthew* (i, 20) it should be noted that the angel addresses Joseph as 'thou son of David,' which is entirely in accordance with the preceding genealogy (*cf. Mt.* i, 1, 6, 17). And in *Luke*, Gabriel predicts to Mary that her child shall be given 'the throne of his father David' (*Lk.* i, 32), it having already been stated in i, 27 that the man to whom she is betrothed is 'Joseph of the House of David' (*cf. Lk.* ii, 4; iii, 31). The *Benedictus*, according to *Luke*, a hymn of thanksgiving for John the Baptist, is most probably a thanksgiving for the birth of the Messiah—'a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David' (*Lk.* i, 69). It is stated (*Lk.* i, 5) that John the Baptist's parents were of the House of Aaron.

Of the descent of Mary we know nothing save *Luke's* statement that she was a cousin of Elizabeth, who was of the daughters of Aaron. It is not improbable, therefore, that Mary also was herself of the daughters of Aaron.

(3) In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus is addressed as 'Son of David' on a number of occasions. In *Mark* only once, by blind Bartimaeus. In *Luke* twice, by Bartimaeus and by the multitude at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem. In *Matthew* four times, twice by two blind men, at the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and by a woman of Canaan (Syro-Phoenician. In the parallel passage in *Mark* 'Son of David' does not occur). This form of address may not perhaps be pressed as proving Davidic descent owing to the official character of the title, 'Son of David' being equivalent to the Christ, the Messiah.

(4) St. Paul in the *Epistle to the Romans* (i, 3), written earlier than all the Synoptic Gospels, states that Jesus Christ was of the seed of David according to the flesh. (*Cf.* also II *Tim.* ii, 8, 'Remember Jesus Christ risen from the dead of the seed of David according to my Gospel.') St. Paul's testimony to the Davidic descent of Jesus is perhaps the weightiest we possess. St. Paul's official position in Judaism and his career as a persecutor enabled him to know the truth of such a claim for Jesus.

(5) It should be noted that the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* testifies indirectly to the Davidic descent of Jesus when he writes: 'For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah' (*Heb.* vii, 14).

(6) In *Revelation* xxii, 16, Jesus thus proclaims Himself: 'I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and morning star' (*cf. Rev.* iii, 7; v, 5).

(7) In two notable passages in the Fourth Gospel Jesus is spoken of as the son of Joseph. (*a*) In the speech of Philip to Nathaniel: 'We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth the son of Joseph' (*John* i, 45). (*b*) In the protest of the Jews against the claim of Jesus that He is the bread that came down from heaven: 'Is not this Jesus the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?' (*John* vi, 42).

These passages (together with some others uncited in *Luke* i and ii, 'the parents,' 'his parents,' 'his father and his mother') complete the direct evidence for the view that Joseph was the father of Jesus according to the flesh.

II.

The second view of the parentage of Jesus is that His mother was a virgin and that He had no human father. This view is derived from the Nativity narratives in the opening chapters of *Matthew* and *Luke*.

A. The first thing to be noted about these narratives is that they belong to the latest sources used by both Evangelists. In *Matthew* this latest source is known as *M*, and in *Luke* as *L*. Both these gospels were composed in their present form some years after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., and may be assigned to a date somewhere between 80 and 90 A.D.[3]

B. When we compare the Nativity Narratives of *Matthew* and *Luke* we observe that they have the following points in common: they both stress (1) the Davidic descent of Jesus, (2) the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem, (3) the Virgin Birth.

All three points agree in this, that they may be interpreted as fulfilments of Old Testament prophecy. This directs our attention to a very singular factor which should be taken into

[3] *Mark's* Gospel was composed before the destruction of Jerusalem, possibly about the year 60. The source *Q*, consisting chiefly of Sayings of Jesus, was composed possibly as early as 50 A.D. Both *Mark* and *Q* are used by *Matthew* and *Luke* as sources for their gospels.

consideration when estimating the historicity of New Testament narratives. The primitive Christians, consisting for the most part of Palestinian Jews and Jews of the Dispersion,[4] regarded the Jewish scriptures as containing large numbers of oracles which were destined to be fulfilled in the person and mission of the Messiah. This belief exerted an influence, and certainly in some cases a detrimental influence, on the historical quality of certain New Testament narratives. This is most clearly observable in *Matthew*. We cite but one example. *Matthew's* account of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem makes Him ride upon both the ass and its colt — a most extraordinary proceeding, especially when the parallel passage in *Mark*, which is known to *Matthew*, refers only to one animal on which Jesus rode. *Matthew* alters *Mark* under the influence of *Zechariah's* oracle (ix, 9), which predicts the entry of Zion's peaceful king riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass. *Matthew* does not recognize that *Zechariah* is here making use of the parallelism of Hebrew poetry and that the prophet is therefore referring only to one animal, although he seems to *Matthew* to be referring to two. It is this primitive Jewish-Christian conviction that the Old Testament oracles must be fulfilled which leads *Matthew* to alter the earlier narrative contained in *Mark*. There are a number of other cases in which *Matthew* acts in the same way.

It is most important to observe that *Matthew* in his narrative of the Virgin Birth refers to it as the fulfilment of a prophecy in *Isaiah* vii, 14. This prophecy in the Hebrew Massoretic text (the authoritative text of the Jewish Church) states that a young woman is with child and will bear a son to whom she will give the name Immanuel, God with us—an act voicing and confirming a faith in God's protecting providence which the faithless King Ahaz lacked.

But how does *Matthew* get a prediction of the Virgin Birth of Jesus out of *Isaiah* vii, 14?

c. This brings to our notice a third important factor in the composition of these early Christian narratives. It is that the

[4] The *Diaspora* or Dispersion at this period existed in large numbers in all the great cities of the Roman Empire, and consisted of (*a*) Jews by descent and (*b*) converts to Judaism from paganism.

Bible of the Christian Church (when it passed out from Palestine into the larger world of the Roman Empire) was not the Hebrew Old Testament but the Greek Old Testament, known as the Septuagint (LXX). And by a very ingenious theory based on a stupendous miracle which we cannot deal with here[5] the Christian Church for some centuries (save in the case of a few of its greatest scholars) came to regard the Septuagint (LXX) as of more authority than the Hebrew Massoretic text.

It should be noted that the LXX of *Isaiah* vii, 14 has *parthenos* (a virgin) as the translation or mistranslation of *almah* (a young woman). This misinterpretation of a mistranslation would seem to be the origin of the Virgin Birth story in *Matthew*. Can it be also the origin of the Virgin Birth story in *Luke*? We have no data on which to decide, but we should note that *Luke* does not refer to *Isaiah* vii, 14, nor is he as addicted as is *Matthew* to citing fulfilments of Old Testament prediction in narrating events in the life of Jesus. In the pagan world in which Luke lived and laboured as a Christian missionary there were current many stories of Divine Saviours who possessed no human father, and it is possible that *Luke*, who 'dearly loved a miracle,' may have been induced by his environment to adopt and insert the Virgin Birth (*Lk.* i, 34-37) into his series of Nativity Narratives, which however are essentially Jewish in their style and atmosphere.

When *Luke's* Nativity Narratives are critically examined (as they are by Dr. Vincent Taylor in his book *The Virgin Birth*[6]) we shall seem to be driven to the conclusion that although the Virgin Birth incident forms part of *Luke's* Gospel and is in his style, and there is no evidence that it was inserted by any later hand, yet it did not constitute one of *Luke's* original sources for his Nativity Narratives, since it is really in conflict with them. We cannot here provide the proof of this, but any plain reader of these narratives (*Luke* i and ii) in his English Bible will note in them such phrases as 'the parents,' 'his parents,' 'his father and his mother,' and that they do not pre-suppose the Virgin Birth. If the reader be a scholar, and turns to the texts, he cannot fail to recognize in their variants the attempts which later

[5] See Swete, Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, p. 14.
[6] Chapters iii and iv, pp. 48-87.

Christian scribes have made to secure an obvious consistency not found in the original text.[7]

D. Closely interwoven with the Virgin Birth narrative is its occurrence in Bethlehem. This also was regarded by primitive Christians as a proof of the Messiahship of Jesus, since it fulfilled the prophecy of *Micah* (*Micah* v, 2, cited as fulfilled in *Matthew* ii, 6), 'Thou Bethlehem out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel.'

If Jesus was not born at Bethlehem *Matthew's* and *Luke's* case for the Virgin Birth collapses. This was seen by Sir Wm. Ramsay, whose able book, *Was Christ Born in Bethlehem?*[8] treats the birth in Bethlehem as crucial. The difficulties of harmonizing *Matthew* and *Luke* on this point are very great.

(1) *Matthew* makes Bethlehem the permanent home of Joseph and Mary; therefore there was no need for a special visit to Bethlehem as *Luke* relates. It is only after the birth of Jesus at Bethlehem that, according to *Matthew*, Joseph and Mary flee from their home in Bethlehem and finally settle in Nazareth. *Luke*, on the other hand, makes Nazareth the permanent home of Joseph and Mary, and it is only the enrolment which causes them to leave it and accounts for Jesus being born in the stable of an inn in Bethlehem. It must be observed, however, that further research has weakened our estimate of the worth of the evidence which Ramsay collected in support of *Luke's* enrolment.

(2) After pointing out that there is no convincing evidence from classical literature and inscriptions for a universal Roman imperial census in, or before, 4 B.C., and that Josephus, the great Jewish historian, writing of this period, knows nothing of a Jewish census before 6 A.D., Professor Creed sums up by saying: 'It is difficult to escape the conclusion that Luke has made a historical mistake.'[9]

[7] For instance, several ancient variants of *Matthew* i, 16 introduce the phrase 'Mary the virgin' into the genealogy and also the statement that she was 'betrothed' to Joseph. Probably the original form of *Matthew* i, 16 ran as follows: 'Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary; and Joseph begat Jesus who is called Christ' (*cf.* Vincent Taylor, *op cit.*, pp. 104-114). In *Luke* ii, 23, Professor Creed assumes the insertion of the words 'as was supposed' into the original text, and writes that it 'will be an addition to cover a discrepancy with the circumstances of the conception as they had been related in c. i' (*op. cit.*, p. 59).

[8] Published just forty years ago (1898).

[9] *The Gospel According to St. Luke*, 1930 (p. 30).

(3) *Luke's* account (ii, 5) of Joseph travelling with Mary, to whom he is betrothed (if the text here be correct[10]), conflicts with Jewish custom and contradicts *Matthew*, who relates that Joseph had taken Mary to his home (*i.e.* married her) before Jesus was born.

(4) It is very difficult, if not impossible, to fit in Joseph's account of the flight to Egypt with the statement that Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth after the presentation of the child Jesus in the Temple at Jerusalem.

It was these inconsistencies in the Virgin Birth narratives, combined with other conflicting evidence, which led Renan, in his *La Vie de Jésu*[11] to assert roundly that Jesus was born at Nazareth and to refer to a number of positive New Testament passages in support of his statement. These indicate :

(*a*) That Jesus was always known popularly as Jesus of Nazareth, or Jesus the Nazarene.

(*b*) That He was officially known in the same way, as evidenced by Pilate's title on the Cross given by all four evangelists.[12]

(*c*) That His followers were called the Nazarenes by the Jews.

(*d*) That Nazareth is called his *patris* by Jesus Himself in the proverb which He cites to the Nazarenes on the occasion of His rejection by them : 'A prophet is without honour in his own *patris*.' *Patris* can only mean either (*a*) the place in which one is born or (*b*) the place from which one's family draws its origin. There is strong evidence, as we have shewn, that Joseph was of the House of David, and therefore his family drew its origin from Bethlehem. In that case, the term *patris* must mean, when used to the Nazarenes by Jesus, that Nazareth was His birthplace. But if Jesus was born in Nazareth and not in Bethlehem, the whole case for the Virgin Birth as related by *Matthew* and *Luke* breaks down.

[10] See Creed, *op. cit.*, p. 33. It seems probable that the original text had 'wife.' This was altered by some copyists to 'betrothed' to secure agreement with i, 27. Then at a later date the words 'betrothed' and 'wife' were combined in some MSS.

[11] Opening of chapter ii.

[12] Although the inscription given differs in each of the four evangelists, they all agree in describing Jesus as a Nazarene.

In concluding this very brief treatment of *Matthew's* and *Luke's* Virgin Birth narratives, there are two methods of Christian rationalistic apologetic to which I must refer, if only to condemn.

(1) *Parthenogenesis*. This seeks to prove that the Virgin Birth is scientifically credible because *parthenogenesis* occurs in the lower species as a mode of propagation. This apologetic is pseudo-scientific.

(2) *Non-miraculous*. This contends that the Virgin Birth as presented by *Matthew* and *Luke* is not miraculous. In *Matthew's* and *Luke's* accounts, as we have them, the Virgin Birth is miraculous, and it is intended by the evangelists to be miraculous in the highest degree. To seek to interpret the narratives as relating to a non-miraculous birth is an example of pseudo-higher criticism which desires to secure the credit of using the methods of historical criticism but is afraid to face the consequences.

E. Besides the evidence already considered in connection with the Virgin Birth there is another class of evidence, not less significant, but not at first sight obvious. We refer to the argument from silence.

(*a*) There is the silence of *Mark*, the oldest Gospel. It may be objected that the Virgin Birth could not be mentioned save in the strictest privacy by Mary during the lifetime of Jesus. That may be so.[13] But how are we to account, not simply for her silence, but for an attitude towards Jesus which seems definitely to prohibit any belief that she could have known of the Virgin Birth? It would seem, according to *Mark* iii, 31-35 (*cf.* iii, 21*f.*), that Mary combined with His relations to restrain Him in His evangelical mission. How could she presume to act thus if the narrative of the Virgin Birth be true? Assuming the truth of the Virgin Birth narrative, we should have expected her to be the most devoted of His followers, but there is no evidence in the earliest gospel that she was even among them. In *Mark* xv, 40 she is not named as being among those at His crucifixion. Later gospels correct his omission (*cf. John* xix, 25).

[13] It should not be forgotten that Mark's Gospel was probably composed nearly thirty years after the Crucifixion.

(*b*) There is no reference to the Virgin Birth in *Q*, the earliest collections of the teaching of Jesus. This need not surprise us, since for Jesus conduct and character were the real tests of Divine relationship. 'Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother' (*Mark* iii, 35); 'Ye shall be sons of the Most High: for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil' (*Luke* vi, 35).

Christ's question, cited in all three Synoptists, 'If David call him Lord, how is He then his son?' indicates the belief of Jesus in His Divine Sonship, but suggests that He attaches no importance to its physical mode — a view which surely underlies much of the teaching of the Fourth Gospel.

(*c*) There is the silence of the *Acts* and the *Epistles*. Many proofs of the Messiahship of Jesus are cited in the *Acts* by the primitive apostles and missionaries of the Gospel, but the Virgin Birth is not cited. Not because, if a fact, it would not have been regarded as a valuable proof, but because it was either unknown or, if known obscurely, then discredited.

This silence of the primitive Christian apostles and missionaries in *Acts* (which terminates its narrative about 65 A.D.) agrees entirely with the absence of any reference to the Virgin Birth in all the New Testament epistles (those of St. Paul and St. Peter, St. James, St. John and St. Jude, as well as that to the Hebrews, and we may include in this silence the Book of the *Revelation*[14]). This silence proves beyond question that the Virgin Birth was no part of the apostolic teaching of the early Christian Church for at least one generation, possibly two, after the Crucifixion. This consideration constitutes a very strong presumption against the historicity of the Virgin Birth.

Some, however, have contended that there is a reference by St. Paul to the Virgin Birth. It is in *Gal.* iv, 4, where St. Paul writes: 'God sent forth His son, born of a woman.' This phrase, 'born of a woman,' is an ordinary Jewish way of describing a human being. When in the Burial Service we hear read out, 'Man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live,' we do not interpret it as referring to the mortality which is the lot of the virgin-born, but of human beings generally.

[14] The curious narrative of *Revelation* xii dealing with the expectant mother, the man-child and the great red dragon, is symbolism and myth, and cannot be cited as historic evidence for the Virgin Birth.

(*d*) The silence of the Fourth Gospel. We have already noted the two passages in the Fourth Gospel in which Jesus is spoken of as the son of Joseph, though not by the Evangelist himself. As this writer is concerned with the utterances only of Jesus Himself and of His contemporaries, it can perhaps hardly be expected that he should refer to the Virgin Birth. He must, however, have been acquainted with the story of the Virgin Birth, for he seems to have known all three Synoptic Gospels. Nor can his reticence be taken as evidence of his disbelief in the Virgin Birth, for there are important events in the life of Jesus which it may be assumed he regarded as historical, but which he does not relate. He states quite definitely that in writing his Gospel he has only made a selection from the material at his disposal (*Jn.* xx, 30).

Nevertheless it may be seriously argued that his theology was in no need of the Virgin Birth either as a mode of the Incarnation or as a proof of the Incarnation, and that this, quite apart from whether he regarded the Virgin Birth as a historic fact, is the reason why we have no reference to it in the Fourth Gospel. This silence of the Evangelist, however, seems to have been regarded in primitive Christian times as a serious omission, and a notable attempt was made to remedy it. A very slight, but ingenious, alteration was made in the Greek text of *John* i, 13, by which what had there been said of the children of God was made to apply exclusively to Jesus Christ. This emendation was widely current in the Church in the middle of the second century, and was so attractive that it was accepted as authoritative by such great Christian leaders as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus and Tertullian. We cite here Dr. Vincent Taylor's verdict on this primitive attempt to emend the text of *John* in favour of the Virgin Birth :

> 'The reading ['who was born,' *Jn.* i, 13] appears in Tertullian, Irenaeus, Justin, but the weight of textual authority is against it. Nor is the reading, as representing what the Evangelist wrote, intrinsically probable. It would rule out the maternity of Mary as well as the paternity of Joseph. The birth would not only be not "of the will of man"; it would not even be "of blood." There would be nothing human about it; from first to last it would be "of God." In short, the reading leads directly to that docetic view of the Person of Christ against which the Johannine writings so earnestly contend' (*The Virgin Birth*, p. 15).

III.

The third view is one about which considerations of reverence have compelled silence in Christian circles. In Jewish circles it is otherwise. This third view is that Jesus was the illegitimate child of Miriam (or Mary) of Nazareth and that the father of the bastard (mamzer) was Panther, a Roman soldier. Hence Jesus is spoken of as Ben-Pandera or Pantiri (the son of Panther). Details in various extant Jewish writings which relate this view in full, or in part, are of such a character that they cannot be reproduced here.

In R. T. Herford's *Christianity in Talmud and Midrash* can be found all references to Jewish sources and authorities, together with pertinent quotations and impartial comments. These cover the first four centuries of the Christian era.

In H. J. Schonfield's *According to the Hebrews* can be found a critical account of mediaeval Jewish forms of the Ben-Pandera story, together with a translation of all publishable portions of the *Toldoth Jeshu* (Generations of Jesus).

It is clear from Herford's scholarly work that the Ben-Pandera story is found in the Mishnah, or earlier sections of the *Talmud*.[15] Schonfield seeks to trace back the sources of the *Toldoth* to the gospel *According to the Hebrews*. This he can hardly be said to succeed in achieving, but his argument indicates, what Herford's book demonstrates, that the view of the parentage of Jesus which the *Toldoth* develops existed at least as early as the second century.

Turning from the strictly Jewish sources, we must seek to answer the question whether the illegitimacy view has any place in primitive Christian literature. The earliest Christian writing which relates the Ben-Pandera story is Origen's *Contra Celsum*, but here only in the form of a quotation from the book, *A True Word*, in which the pagan philosopher Celsus attacks the Christian religion. The attack of Celsus, written about 175 A.D., no longer exists, but Origen, when confuting it many years later in his *Contra Celsum*, cites large portions of it. Celsus puts part

[15] 'The close of the Mishnah is usually dated at about A.D. 220' (Herford, *op. cit.*, p. 349).

of his attack into the mouth of a Jew, who addresses Jesus thus:

> '(You) invented your birth from a virgin. (In reality, you were) born in a certain Jewish village of a poor country-woman, who earned her living by spinning, and who was turned out of doors by the carpenter to whom she was betrothed, and wandering about for a time, she shamefully gave birth to you, Jesus, the bastard child of a certain soldier called Panthera' (*Contra Celsum,* Bk. I, xxviii, xxxii).

So far as I know, no Christian writer earlier than Origen explicitly relates the Ben-Pandera story, yet we are compelled to conclude that it was known in Christian circles long before the time of Origen. There is evidence that it was known even while the New Testament was being written. It seems certainly to have been known to *Matthew*. In *Matthew's* genealogy of Jesus, besides the name of Mary, those of four other women occur. This is quite unusual in scriptural genealogies, and it is absent in *Luke's* genealogy. These four women are all of them notable, almost notorious, in the history of Israel: (1) Rahab, the Canaanitish sacred woman or prostitute, with her house on the wall of Jericho; (2) Tamar, the daughter-in-law of Judah, who narrowly escapes being burnt alive for immorality; (3) Ruth, the Moabitess and widow-woman, whose methods of securing her second husband were not above uncharitable criticism; (4) Bath-sheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, more sinned against than sinning.

Why are their names introduced into *Matthew's* genealogy? It is plainly to indicate that the moral disabilities which purists might charge against them did not preclude their being selected by Divine Providence to become 'Mothers in Israel' and actual ancestresses—three of them of David himself, and the fourth the mother of Solomon. But why stress this fact? Plainly in order to prepare the reader to encounter some similar moral objection to Mary, the mother of Jesus. *Matthew's* subsequent narrative makes clear what is the nature of this moral objection, which however the Gospel shews to be, from its point of view, entirely groundless and due to a lack of understanding that it had been predicted by *Isaiah* hundreds of years before. This indicates that the illegitimacy view of the birth of Jesus was already in existence before *Matthew's* gospel was written, else we should have no refutation of it in that gospel.

As *Mark* and *Q* contain no direct or even oblique reference

to the Ben-Pandera story, and it is only found in the latest source of *Matthew*, it may be assumed that it only came into existence in the period after the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A.D.), but not later than 90 A.D. In that case it is not unnatural to suppose that the Ben-Pandera story would be known to the writer of the Fourth Gospel, and we have perhaps an echo of it in *John* viii, 41, where His Jewish opponents say to Jesus, 'We were not born of fornication.'

We shall probably not be wrong in assuming that just as Jewish controversialists sought to refute the Christian claim of the Resurrection of Jesus by declaring that His disciples had stolen His body from the sepulchre (*Mt.* xxviii, 13), so they sought to confute Christian claims for the Virgin Birth of Jesus by the accusation of illegitimacy. If, as we believe, the Virgin Birth story began to secure a place in Christian doctrine in the period after the destruction of Jerusalem, we must suppose that the illegitimacy rebuttal of it came into existence almost immediately afterwards, but perhaps was only used by Jewish controversialists of the less reputable type. It is of interest to note that Justin Martyr, writing about the middle of the second century, in his *Dialogue with Trypho, a Jew*, although he puts two arguments[16] into the mouth of Trypho in refutation of the Virgin Birth, yet does not make Trypho use the argument of illegitimacy. But Justin Martyr does not hesitate in the same work to refer to the organized Jewish propaganda of attack and slander directed against Christianity.

In *Luke* no knowledge is exhibited of the illegitimacy story, and this suggests that the Greek Christian world for which this gospel was mainly written the Jewish illegitimacy story was at this time unknown or else entirely discredited.

The fact that we have no evidence for the existence of the illegitimacy story, either in Christian or Jewish circles, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the fact also that we can see how it could be created by the needs of Jewish controversialists of the baser sort, deprives the illegitimacy story of any serious claims to historicity.

[16] (1) That the word *almah* does not mean a virgin. (2) That it is degrading to make the birth of the Messiah like that of personages in the pagan myths.

IV.

I am here compelled to deal with a fourth view of the parentage of Jesus because it has a wide acceptance in Germany today. This view is that neither of the parents of Jesus was of Jewish race. This theory was first brought prominently before the British public in Houston Chamberlain's extremely influential book, *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century*.[17] Houston Chamberlain states emphatically in this work:

> 'There is . . . not the slightest foundation for the supposition that Christ's parents were of Jewish descent' (*op cit.*, p. 206).

The main foundation of his argument is the well-known fact that a large foreign element existed in the population of Galilee for some centuries before the birth of Jesus. Houston Chamberlain complains that Renan in the fifth volume of his *Histoire du peuple d'Irsaël*[18]

> 'makes the categorical assertion '*Jésus était un Juif,*' and attacks with unwonted bitterness those who dare doubt the fact' (p. 211).

There is no Biblical critic of eminence who does not agree with Renan. Nevertheless those who assert that Jesus was a Jew by race do not mean, of course, that He had not a drop of Gentile blood in His veins. That He had, is proved by *Matthew's* genealogy, which, for instance, inserts a Moabitess and a Canaanite among his ancestors.

To maintain, in view of such historical evidence as we possess, that Jesus was not a Jew by race, can only be done under the influence of Pan-Teutonic or Anti-Semitic obsessions.

This concludes our brief survey of the competing views of the parentage of Jesus and the historical evidence for them. It is clear that the view that Jesus was the son of Joseph and Mary was the conviction of the primitive Christian Church down to at least the destruction of Jerusalem. It was held by St. Peter and St. Paul and St. James the Just. The view that Jesus was born of a virgin-mother made its appearance in Church circles after

[17] 'The English translation of this book was published in 1910 and the German text appeared some ten years earlier. A lady-in-waiting in the German court told me some years before the Great War that the Kaiser had presented 7,000 copies of this book to all the leading people in Germany.'

[18] 1891.

70 A.D., and by 150 A.D. had replaced the earlier view with a few exceptions.[19] This rapid spread in Church circles of belief in the Virgin Birth was due to the creation of the Canon of the Four Gospels in the first half of the second century and to the fact that two out of these four authoritative volumes taught the Virgin Birth. Another important reason for the rapid spread of the doctrine was its great apologetic value. It harmonized with the prepossessions of a pagan world which was being rapidly won to Christianity, and, curiously enough as it may seem to us, the doctrine of the Virgin Birth served as a useful weapon in the hands of orthodox Christians against Docetists. Indeed it must have played an invaluable part in slaying Docetism.

The first Christian writer outside the N.T. to cite the Virgin Birth is St. Ignatius. The *Epistles* in which he cites it were written about 110 A.D. Not much later, 'born of the Virgin Mary' became an article in the Baptismal creed. It was placed there as a defence of the Christian faith against those Gnostic teachers who taught the Docetic view that Jesus possessed no body of flesh and blood but only a phantasmal spiritual body. Here we may note, by the way, we have a fifth view of the parentage of Jesus, that He possessed no human parents at all. The purpose of the Virgin Birth clause in the Apostles' Creed was not to declare the virginity of Mary but the full humanity of Jesus Christ.

If it be contended that to be an orthodox Christian one must believe in the Virgin Birth, it is well to remind those who make this assertion of the words of Dr. Armitage Robinson, Dean of Westminster, contained in an open letter addressed by him to Dr. Randall Davidson, Archbishop of Canterbury:

> 'If the Bishops were asked to declare that the Incarnation is a cardinal doctrine of the faith, such a statement would be superfluous indeed, but it would be true. But to say that the historical fact of the Virgin-birth is a cardinal doctrine of the faith is to use language which no Synod of Bishops, so far as I am aware, has ever ventured to use' (*Some Thoughts on the Incarnation,* p. xiii).

This statement, accepted by the Archbishop, has never been publicly confuted or contradicted.

[19] These exceptions were the primitive Jewish Christian bodies of Ebionites and possibly Nazarenes, and the Roman Adoptionists.

ADVANCE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH*

By the Right Rev. W. G. Whittingham, D.D., Lord Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich.

'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we know him that is true' (I *John* v.20).

THE publication of the *Report of the Commission on Christian Doctrine* marks an important stage in the history of the Church of England. Modern Churchmen will have received it thankfully, not only because it seems to have given them their rightful place in our comprehensive Church, but because it is an acknowledgment of the principles for which they stand. Such preliminary statements as

> 'Assent to formularies and the use of liturgical language should be understood as signifying a general acceptance without implying detailed assent to every phrase or proposition employed,'

and those that immediately follow this, that they

> 'apply to the authorised teachers as well as to other members of the Church'

and

> 'the tradition of the inerrancy of the Bible commonly held in the Church till the beginning of the nineteenth century cannot be maintained in the light of the knowledge now at our disposal'

express a point of view long claimed and from time to time acknowledged, but specially welcome as statements of principles which govern as a whole the *Report* which follows them and particularly as they are applied. They give the stamp of whatever authority the *Report* possesses not merely to so much of the Modernist position as is implied in them, but to the principles for which Modernism stands, and are a token of agreement with those principles. Among them and certainly implied in the *Report* is the legitimacy, and if so surely the necessity, of enquiry into the character of the documents which give the basis of our faith, of the circumstances attending the writing of them, and of their subsequent history and, what is of even more impor-

* The Annual Sermon of the Modern Churchmen's Union preached at St. Martin's-in-the-Fields on May 18, 1938.

tance, of the bearing of other fields of knowledge and the play of an educated intelligence upon them — in a word of criticism. Whatever qualification may be intended by the sentence,

> 'An individual Christian who rejects any part of the Church's belief is guilty of presumption unless he feels himself bound in conscience to do so,'

the place of criticism, thorough, searching, full is conceded. As genuine criticism can have but one object, to ascertain and establish in the particular field to which it is applied, the truth in that field, it may be said that there can be no true criticism that is not conscientious. Secondly, it admits the distinction, by no means always easy to define, between what we understand as spiritual truth on the one hand and the language or other forms in which it is embodied on the other.

It is well understood that the *Report* is not authoritative in the sense that it would be if it had the endorsement of the Church, or any part of it, constitutionally given. It is the work of a number of distinguished Churchmen, distinguished for their learning and intellectual ability, but it possesses no more ecclesiastical authority than belongs as individuals to those whose names it bears. Those names carry great weight among us; a statement put forth by them collectively, although qualified by a number of notes and comments which call attention to differences of view, cannot fail to be of significance and, which is perhaps of more importance, to exert widespread influence.

It is evident however from the comments that have been made that a large number of ordinary Church people, clerical and lay, will by no means go along with the authors of this report. And it is precisely on the place given to modernist principles that they express their disagreement. A striking instance of disagreement, perhaps the most striking, will help us to note how wide that disagreement may be with what it is chiefly concerned.

The *Report* has a section dealing with the place and work of Jesus Christ in the World's Redemption. A sub-section of this portion deals with the Virgin Birth which it includes under the heading of 'The Affirmations of Faith.' To many churchmen to question the historic validity of this statement is to cut the ground from under the doctrine of the Incarnation and to de-

stroy the peculiar Divine authority which our Lord possesses. It is not relevant to their point of view, or does not seem to them to be, that this affirmation was not the first ground of the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ and could not have been, but was only laid hold of in support of his Divine character when that had already been acknowledged; nor that any evidence for it from the historic standpoint may be said to be non-existent. To them the doctrine, for it holds the place of a doctrine, is not a truth of history but an object of faith. It seems to them that all that is traditionally linked up with it of Christ's nature and claim depends upon it and if this expression of the doctrine goes it must go too. They do not distinguish between the fact of the incarnation and the mode of its achievement. They do not realise that what Christ is is one thing, the explanation of it which the Church has found, the way it supposes it to have come about is another. The whole subject is to them an essential article of the Christian faith.

It is interesting to notice how the *Report* deals with the subject. It admits that as an historical fact the Virgin Birth cannot be independent of historical evidence, although the subject is one on which the historical evidence by itself cannot be other than inconclusive, and it goes on to indicate the grounds upon which the doctrine is valued which are wholly theoretical and even theoretically not very convincing. It implies therefore that although its basis must be historic it must, if accepted, be accepted to a large extent by faith, and it allows the claim of faith to decide in the field of history and to over-ride mere historical and critical considerations. That can hardly be a satisfactory conclusion to a modernist. Nevertheless the *Report* does concede the important fact that the underlying doctrine of the Incarnation may be quite sincerely held by a churchman apart from acceptance of the mode by which traditionally the Incarnation is understood to have happened; and it is this concession that so many find it impossible to allow. To them the substratum of history, not as historic criticism gives it to us, but as tradition has given it to us, is so wrought up with the spiritual content which appeals to our faith, that the two are inseparable and faith must govern the history as well as the spiritual truth enshrined in it.

This will serve to show how much must yet be won before the legitimate aims of modernism are secured. It would not matter seriously to us if the traditional view were held if found helpful, provided it were recognised that any individual who did not find it helpful might quite freely discard it; that it was the spiritual apprehension of the spiritual truth that mattered: and this is what we must continue to strive for.

One of the chief aims therefore for us to keep before us is the recognition of the God-given nature of our human intelligence and the obligations we are under to use it and to trust to the conclusions that it gives us; to claim for it that it is in its own sphere, that of history and of doctrine, supreme. Distrust of the conclusions to which it may lead us on the one hand and a questioning of the adequacy of the faculty itself on the other have led to the disparagement of the intellect in religion and the need of employing it is to a considerable extent dispensed with, so that to rationalise has become a term of reproach.

I have no doubt that the source of this distrust has been the quasi-dualism which the doctrine of the Fall seems to have begotten, whereby one side of our nature, in the main the physical side, as the Ninth Article appears to show, but involving also the intellectual side, was regarded as inherently evil. It may have been supported, no doubt it was, by the self-sufficiency to which we are all of us more or less prone; but it seems to have lost sight of the fact that faith too is a human quality and may be quite as defective as and no more to be trusted than reason.

It is rather surprising that the claim of faith to determine doctrine should have been given the place it has held in a Church which has for centuries upheld the cause of sound learning, has urged the pursuit of learning upon its teachers and professed to accept its conclusions; but that it has done so there can I think be no doubt, and it is precisely this fact that has brought about the difficulties which modernism strives to overcome. In face of the opposite ways in which this aspect of the *Report* is regarded it is for us to continue to insist on the rightful place of knowledge and of the play of intelligence on the doctrines and doctrinal inferences and expressions which are found both in the Creeds and in the Worship of the Church.

Then we must try to distinguish between the proper objects of faith and the proper objects of intelligence, between the faith that leads to the pursuit of right doing and the intelligence which leads to right thinking, faith giving a moral and spiritual drive and reason an intellectual drive, but both equally the functioning of one God-given nature. Admittedly this is not always an easy thing to do. For even the most vital and spiritual of the truths we hold as Christians, the sense of God, that He is and what He is, that we are in a personal relation to Him, that the Spirit of God is the Spirit of righteousness and love, these truths are capable of being put into terms of speech and thought, and unless we could so translate them we could hardly realise them at all. Yet we can and do recognise the distinction. Matthew Arnold made it long ago in *Literature and Dogma*; the ordinary man makes it when he distinguishes between the spirit of the Christian life and the doctrines which the Christian professes to hold. To insist that what chiefly matters in religion is conduct, living in the Christian spirit and whatever of motive and spiritual power will enable us to do this effectually, this we must keep constantly before us.

And here we may frankly recognise a reason why Modernism has been so often regarded with suspicion. Partly it has been due to the confusion between the objects of faith and the objects of intelligence. But partly also because it has been too often regarded, as all critical processes may tend to be, as something leading to purely negative results. So far as clearing away what encumbers our faith this is no doubt still the work of criticism; but to criticise is simply to try to understand, and to understand Christianity is for a Christian to try to live as a Christian should.

Still more has this suspicion arisen because in the very fact that the sphere in which it is applied, the sphere of doctrine, of the intellectual presentation of religious truth, it is concerned with the side intrinsically of less importance, the intellectual side. There is no question that the spiritual or emotional side of faith, the side that lays hold of the heart and conscience, is more important, far more important than the dogmatic side. To be a follower of the Lord in practice is infinitely more important than to know rightly what the Incarnation implies

and the mode by which God effected it. But modernism is concerned with the other side first because it desires the true side of faith to have the fuller and freer scope. It is not because we are indifferent to the supreme value of the life of faith that we concern ourselves with the correct interpretation of Christian doctrine but precisely because we do care for this life of faith. Therefore it is the more incumbent upon us to do our utmost to dispel confusion and to distinguish as carefully as we can between the faith by which a soul may live and the doctrines in which that faith finds expression, between the knowledge which whether adequate or inadequate, and possibly still more the more imperfect it may be, tends as St. Paul says to 'puff up' and the love which 'buildeth up.'

Finally it seems to me that this may well prove to be the most hopeful line by which to realise the unity of Christians. Endeavours to bring Re-union to a broken Christian Church have hitherto failed because the causes which occasioned the original breach still tend to re-assert themselves. Unquestionably conceit and obstinacy and various forms of selfishness and self will have been at work and possibly still are, though I think we are being taught to overcome them and they sometimes seem to have very largely disappeared. The ostensible causes have been mainly doctrinal and these persist. It is one of the great aims of Modernism to remove them by the attainment of a clearer knowledge of what the truth really is, but he would be sanguine indeed who supposed that in any short length of time so much accord would have been won in this field as to enable the great Christian bodies to hold all together in one Communion and fellowship on the basis of the common acceptance of either one doctrine or one order. But if we could, while admitting differences of administration and differences in intellectual appreciation and in the varying doctrines by which we express these, agree to accept as a bond of unity simply the affirmations of a common faith in a strict use of that term, the love of the Lord and the love of the brethren, we might be able to achieve it, and indeed by the practice of this love quite simply, discover presently that we were the possessors already of the unity we were seeking.

Meanwhile we may be thankful indeed for the advance that in our own lifetime we have seen in happier relations; thankful for a stronger sense of the one Spirit that claims the allegiance of us all. We may be thankful too for the advance in the knowledge of Christian truth, and for a clearer sense of what the Christian spirit really is,

> 'that the Son of God hath come and hath given us an understanding that we know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. My little children guard yourselves from idols.'

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FOCUS OF BELIEF *

The name of this book rightly indicates the author's central thought and intention. Dr. Whately regards it as an 'essay in focalization.' He has tried to trace the course of several convergent lines of thought that lead, for his own mind, to 'an absolutely focalized view of the Christian creed.' If by a 'focus' we understand 'a point of concentration,' then a 'Focus of Belief' will indicate that unification and concentration which is the quest and the goal of all philosophico-religious thought.

To Dr. Whately this 'focus' is 'Redemption'—the one dominant idea which, as he holds, affords 'a master-key for the interpretation of all Christian—and ultimately of all religious—truth,' and which simplifies and centralises the function of faith in itself.

A book of this character makes searching demands of a reviewer. A synoptic view of Christian truth is never lightly reached and not to be lightly discussed. For one thing, it cannot, as the author rightly recognises, be imposed upon other minds which have their own constellations of ideas—constellations which, like those of our stellar universe, recede into the unfathomed and unfathomable. To stand where an author stands should be the endeavour of every exegete; and this is only possible by intuition. And of intuition Dr. Whately well and truly says that its real authority lies *in the intuiting itself*, and that its use when we are trying to convince another is to get him to *see* the thing as we see it. The highly condensed, not to speak of the obscure and even enigmatic, nature of Dr. Whately's style of writing does not make this task of the reviewer, however conscientious, less difficult. In fine, Dr. Whately has written an important book; but the method of presentation (his position is not built up in any architechtonic fashion, but posited throughout) as well as the compressed and elusive style in which his thought is presented, make considerable demands on the reader and on his time.

* *The Focus of Belief.* By A. R. Whately, M.A., D.D. (Cambridge University Press. 1937. 8/6 net.)

His standpoint and method of approach have clearly been much influenced, though not dominated, by what is vaguely and generally called 'Barthianism.' Nowhere does he argue *to* a position: always he argues *within* a position. Theism, and Christian Theism, is posited as true throughout. In consequence, those who turn to the book for a closely reasoned apologetic for Christianity will turn in vain. The reader is asked by the author, well on in the book, to bear steadily in mind that its purpose is 'not to adduce empirical evidence for Theism, but to exhibit its inclusive rationality on the supposition of its truth.' (The interior argumentativeness of Dr. Whately's mind is seen by the parenthetical aside which follows this statement—'The success of this attempt would be, as a fact in itself, empirical evidence.') This is very much in line with Anselm's *credo ut intelligam*. The real difficulty with the position for a modern, as distinguished from a mediaeval, man is that the *content* of the *credo* is no longer regarded as decided by 'the Church': and thus he cannot speak or think of 'belief' without asking what are the several articles included therein. The study of history in a scientific manner has exploded the notion of an unchanging deposit of Christian dogma; and our 'modern' man, familiar as he is with the content of the *credo* of Christians in former ages, familiar also with the dwindling nature of this content through historical inquiry, familiar also with his own repudiation of the presuppositions on which the mediaevalist's *credo* was based, is compelled to take his beliefs one by one, to consider their ground not as a totality but as individual—though, of course, interdependent. That Dr. Whately cannot himself escape this modern situation is evident throughout his book. For his treatment of most of the contentious theological issues which have engrossed Christian thinkers through all the centuries—Faith and Reason, the Idea of God, Sin, Salvation, Atonement, Incarnation, Eschatology—is his own treatment; and he never hesitates to repudiate other theologians' conclusions when they do not seem to him to be in accord with his own 'intellectual intuition.'

In point of fact Dr. Whately's theological conclusions are in the line of traditional orthodoxy: and it would seem to the reader that the 'rational processes' which 'assisted the emergence' of his 'intellectual intuition'—itself in its turn being called to the task of 'taking control of' these rational processes—are themselves more firmly anchored to external authority than he himself, probably, would argumentatively admit.

> 'It is our conviction,' says Dr. Whately, 'that the whole content of the Christian meaning of Redemption is one inclusive and indiscerptible whole—that Redemption and Revelation may, from the side of either, be brought under one formula—however little we may have succeeded in bringing this home even to sympathetic readers.'

That Revelation and Redemption are indeed indiscerptible is true not only to essential New Testament thought but to the demands of our modern thinking. But if this latter verity is thought out, and thought through, it

would seem to the reviewer to lead to an orientation to the whole issue somewhat less abstract than that which characterises this discussion. For one thing, the Barthian 'Word of God' is as much subjectively conditioned as any other word. For another thing, the criterion of 'Redemption' is the redeemed life. Perhaps the basal trouble to-day about the Church's affirmations of belief is they are not more clearly vindicated in lives redeemed from sin and error. The mind of our modern era is, and, as I believe, rightly is, scientific: and religious belief becomes subject to the test of *experience*, like every other kind of belief. If the 'Gospel of Redemption' is 'the focus of belief,' this 'Gospel' must itself be tested. It does not descend like a bolt from the blue. It has to be recognised, or accepted, by some one. And its recognition, or acceptance, can only be decided by its coherence with the facts of life and of the universe, and—since it is a 'Gospel of *Redemption*' —by its practical vindication in lives which can be seen to be really 'redeemed.'

Dr. Whately—as I understand him (and I feel it necessary to add this proviso)—seeks a Gospel which is free 'from all entanglement with the uncertainties of human thinking': and though, as he says, such freedom 'only enhances its significance in relation to *all* thought and life, in their wholeness and at their root,' the question has yet to be asked whether such a 'Gospel' is *possible* to man. For myself I do not believe it possible, nor indeed desirable. 'Christianity,' Dr. Whately says, 'means, from end to end, intervention'; and, for that reason, he regards it as 'alien to the Liberal tradition.' But, apart from the point that an 'intervention' has to be *recognised* as such (otherwise we could not even talk about it), the real question surely is, not *What Christianity* (as an entity) *means*, but *How is the message constitutive of Christianity known to be what it is*. So while Dr. Whately would firmly dissent from the notion that the 'Gospel' he finds to focus belief is 'a gospel of escape,' that question still remains.

I am conscious in bringing this review to a close that I have not done justice to the concentration and wide sweep of the author's thought. But I trust that I have indicated its stimulating and original character. It is certainly not 'milk for babes.' It is the kind of book which compels the careful and appreciative reader to give his reasons for disagreement when such exists.

I close with a paragraph which will serve both to reveal the style and the thought of a challenging book. Speaking of 'the plurality of the alleged events which express historically the Divine happening which we call Redemption, Dr. Whately writes:

> 'The focus, in history and in idea, is the Cross; the Cross in its Divine and unique significance, the one and only paradox of religion, the descent of the Highest, the negation in the heart of the Absolute, the black sky between God and God. Then follow, by immediate necessity, the victory of the Resurrection, the pledge of the Return, the

interim Kingdom and Presence of the ascended Christ, and lastly (because the knowledge of the Unique is unique knowledge) the Pentecostal Gift. None of these apart from the rest. And the whole is one simple and transcendent Fact, the moment of Time in Eternity and the moment of Eternity in Time, the Infinite that is too great to enter the realm of finite except at an indivisible point.' C. J. WRIGHT.

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A NEW LEVIATHAN*

There is always something cheering in seeing an old man beginning on a new subject; Cato learning Greek at sixty, Mr. Pickwick setting out in search of adventure, and Mr. Scroge setting up as a philanthropist at a similar advanced perod of life, are practical demonstrations of the immortality of the human soul, which does not, as our modern worshippers of Youth do vainly talk, grow old along with the body. Mr. Morley Roberts has touched life at many points and has had adventures in many lands and seas. He has won fame as a novelist and as a writer of short stories. Like many another master of fiction he cherished the design of doing solid scientific work of the kind which brings little pecuniary reward. The friend and biographer of Gissing and of Hudson turned to medical research and has won the recognition of authorities by his studies on tumours and cancer.

For many years, as we see from a letter to him from W. H. Hudson, he has sought to apply biologcal methods to the social organism, that great Leviathan, as Hobbes calls it, that magnified, non-natural man, in whose body individual human beings are, as it were, cells. The notion of the body politic is as old as political thought itself. We read in Livy how a worthy Consul prevented a general strike of the Roman proletariate by relating the fable of the belly and its members. But is the notion anything more than an analogy? Chesterton said that the State is no more an organism than the British Empire is a lion. Yet the progress of biological study, the discovery that the human body is composed of independent cells, each with an individuality of its own, does tend to make the analogy something more than a fanciful comparison. According to Mr. Roberts, the first writer to evolve the idea of the social organism was Herbert Spencer. But Spencer, like the creator of Frankenstein, seized with horror at the all-devouring monster he had conjured into existence, tried to smother his own offspring legitimately descended from Hobbes.

Herbert Spencer was, in fact, a fraud; his affectation of hard-hearted materialism cloaked all the worst vices of the Victorian sentimentalist.

> 'Spencer was sure that evil would disappear. He believed that absolute perfectibility would be the lot of humanity. Progress was a beneficent necessity. He believed in perpetual peace.'

* *Bio-Politics*. By Morley Roberts. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 15/-.)

Herein he showed himself less enlightened than the Prayer Book which 'with some biological caution' modestly limits its prayer for peace to our own time.

Huxley was just as bad. He shared Spencer's astounding idealism, and regarded it as within human power, aided by ethics, to get the better of cosmic forces. Just such another rose-pink optimist was John Stuart Mill, who spoke of the philosophy of progress, as if he knew what progress was and that it will continue for ever. One would have thought that all that has happened in the last twenty-five years and the prospect of what may reasonably be expected to happen in the next twenty-five would have knocked all this nonsense out of the sociologists, but they are slow to learn. For one thing they know very little about their own insides. 'It is impossible to read any modern sociologists without feeling that he does not know how his body works, how his organs and tissues and cells grow and live.' The moral is that he would do well to imitate Mr. Morley Roberts and go in for a sound course of medical study.

At the outset we are confronted with the problem which lies at the root of so many inquiries. Is man a free agent? And if the answer be returned in the affirmative, is not the comparison between individual men and the cells in a body a very imperfect and misleading one? Our author declines to enter on this question, which he leaves to theologians and metaphysicians. But we suppose that the difficulty is one which confronts all philosophies of history. And the bio-politician, particularly if he has read and understood John Hunter on the 'consciousness' of cells and tissues, can turn the tables on the theologian and ask him how he knows that cells haven't got free will. Some cells, it appears, have very strong Chauvinist opinions and feel it their sacred duty to feed on other cells at all costs. Lucretius, the Epicurean exponent of the atomic theory, allowed his atoms free will; they had a natural tendency to the right or the left, just as newspapers have to-day.

The body seems to be organised on definitely conservative lines. 'What is the brain, which the over-logical are ready to obey like slaves, but a somatic assembly of would-be dominating aristocrats, a cerebral senate or House of Lords?' But the Upper Chamber does not have it all its own way; the instincts of the various colonies and classes of the mammalian body generally get the better of the intellectual aristocracy in the bodily as in the social organism, and the doctrinaire politician finds that nothing political is achieved by intellect. The millennium, which will not be reached for some million years or so, will arrive when the members learn to obey their head, and society is organised on a caste system. Even in our present imperfect state those societies are happiest where each class enjoys doing its own work.

'With real sympathy of social parts there is no reason why an

> outcaste sweeper with his broom might not be as happy as any Brahmin with all his caste marks and thread, and relatively as much endowed with liberty. . . . For one man who desires some higher caste marks or signs of social superiority, millions care for no more than they have, provided they are sure of keeping it.'

The most successful experiment in good living was the benevolent despotism of the Incas in Peru. 'The Spaniards among the wreck they wrought in America destroyed the first evolutionary living proof that a real organic State is possible.' But as a rule such experiments end in premature failure, because the ruling classes, too conscious of their own status, do not recognise the deep social instincts they drive into revolt.

Mr. Roberts has many a fling at the idols of the market place. Education is absorbing more social energy than it ought and using it, not for the good of the national organism, but to its detriment.

> What a nation needs is biological education. By this I do not mean instruction in biology, since the vast proportion of workers must remain essentially incapable of science, but training on biological lines for the social functional work they as masses are destined to perform in differentiated tribal distribution. But now we have no tribal education beyond that found in the playing-fields, which is in most cases infinitely more valuable than that given in class-rooms by teachers whom no educated man considers educated. . . . The social physiologist must inevitably regard the whole institution as parasitic and not too obviously innocent.'

Missions break up ancient life without replacing what they destroy; they may be compared to tumours. 'Cannibalism has assuredly been a great factor in evolution,' not always, alas! a factor for good, for the ancestors of our sinful race seem to have devoured a higher species, the Neanderthal man, a big-brained vegetarian who would have made a much better lord of creation than homo sapiens—falsely so called.

It need hardly be said that Mr. Morley Roberts in his capacity of biologist regards war as perfectly normal and inevitable. We say of biologist or bio-politician, for we are sure that our author sees that life may be viewed from other planes. The Schoolmen used to say, *In foro scientiae non est caedes*, from the point of view of science there is no such thing as murder. And we think that he is amply justified in holding that the State is sub-human. St. John calls the Roman Empire, materially the most successful political organisation which ever existed, the beast, and envisaged it as a fantastic monster. It has often been pointed out that the early Christians were strangely indifferent to social reform. They did not believe that the State could be really reformed. What they did try to do, when they had in some measure got rid of the anticipation of a speedy end of the world, was to build up a rival polity, the Church, the body of Christ. But the Church, in spite of all the flattering things that were said about it, proved nearly as great a disappointment as the State. We shall do well, perhaps, to remind ourselves from time to time of the Platonic and Pauline

conception that we belong to a super-mundane order, the life of which is independent of biological factors. 'For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body that it may be made like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.'

GAMALIEL MILNER.

LA CRISE MORALE DU TEMPS PRESENT ET L'EDUCATION HUMAINE*

We welcome Loisy's recent Volume, *La Crise morale du temps présent et l'Education humaine.*

The title of this book is a guide to its breadth; the name of its author is a guarantee of its depth. In it Monsieur Loisy reviews the present world situation and offers a well-reasoned case for the education of humanity out of its present distresses along moral and spiritual lines.

Loisy is well known in England as a New Testament critic with such radical views as do not readily commend themselves to English theologians. He is known by some for the part he played in connection with the Modernist Movement in the Roman Church. To a few he is known as an eminent thinker with sharply defined religious and ethical ideals. But in *La Crise morale du temps présent et L'Education humaine* there is afforded an opportunity for readers to grasp something of the real significance of all his thought in its application to human development; this book, characteristically brilliant in style and form, shows Loisy, the critic, the theologian and the moralist, deeply concerned with the present problems of the world and their solution. The author brings to his task a mind matured and sharpened by years of careful mental and moral discipline; and that he is a Frenchman—he is in the tradition of nineteenth century French Liberalism—is an added reason for English readers to acquaint themselves with his views.

The Preface makes clear the aim of the book. The writer wishes to demonstrate the importance for humanity of a developing moral discipline based upon a recognition of the validity of a mystical element in human life. Speaking of his lecture on *Le Mysticisme*, addressed to the Collège de France in 1923, he says:

> *J'essayais . . . de montrer que le mysticisme n'est pas ce qu'un vain peuple pense, une lèpre du cerveau humain, à nous léguée par les temps d'ignorance et dont le progrès scientifiques des derniers siècles aurait dévoilé toute la misère, mais le principe même de la vie spirituelle dans l'homme . . . contre lequel s'escriment en vain maintenant la raison et la science, sans s'apercevoir qu'elles en dépendent.*

* *La Crise Morale du Temps Présent et L'Education Humaine.* By Monsieur A. Loisy. (Paris: Libraire Émile Nourry. 1937.)

In the book at present under review he has the same object in view. Morality is mysticism in action; and the development of humanity, if humanity is to fulfil its purpose in the world, must be along the lines of ethical enlightenment and moral freedom.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I is concerned with a justification of the statement in the title that we are in a time of moral crisis and with a discussion upon the nature of this crisis. Chapter I deals with the relationships between religion and morality and historical religions. Here we find a recapitulation of Loisy's ideas in regard to this problem. Religion is eternal; the life of the spirit in humanity is fundamental to a sound human development along moral lines. But religions, the necessary historical expressions of religion, must change with the developing moral consciousness of humanity, if they are not to become barriers to spiritual progress. Speaking of the faith of Peter in the Resurrection of Jesus, which is the basis of historical Christianity, Loisy says:

> *Cette foi de Simon-Pierre n'a jamais été rationnellement démonstrable, ni réallement démontrée; elle comportait aussi une forte part de mythe et d'illusion, puisque Jésus n'est pas venu avec le royaume . . . .; la foi n'a pas cessé de créer les illusions dont elle avait besoin pour ne pas tomber* (p. 37).

But he believes that the faith of Peter is

> *Témoignage d'un effort spirituel pour soulever l'humanité vers un idéal religieux et moral bien supérieur à celui des religions et philosophies professées dans l'empire romain en ce temps-là* (p. 37).

It is when the *myth* is taken as demonstrable and as the content of faith rather than its medium of expression that, according to Loisy, historical Christianity fails to remain a spiritual influence in humanity. He says, in reference to the authoritarianism and obscurantism of the Papacy:

> *Mais c'est une autre question de savoir si la Papauté n'est pas en train de compromettre à fond le dépôt chrétien dont elle se prétend la gardienne infaillible* (p. 46).

Having criticized in Chapter I the dictatorial trend of the Papacy, a trend considerably accelerated under Pope Pius XI, in Chapters II, III and IV Loisy continues his attack on totalitarian ideologies by criticisms of the dictatorships under Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin. Each is arraigned in turn on the charge that they suppress the free expression of personality. Chapter V is given to the question of the relationship of science and morality. All moral and spiritual problems should be treated scientifically; but science has no more the right to deny *a priori* the validity of spiritual and mystical experiences in humanity than has the Papacy and other dictatorships the right to enslave science in their own causes.

In this first part of the book Loisy sometimes speaks as a Frenchman rather than as a philosopher, and as an anti-Papist democrat rather than as a dogmatic theologian. But the presentation of his thesis is always both stimulating and well-documented.

Part II is given to his suggestions for the reconciliation of the conflict between science and religion and for the moral education of humanity. Perhaps his most valuable contribution is in his endeavour to preach an intellectual modesty and a discipline of the mind which allows for freedom of thought and does not claim an infallible exhaustiveness. He delivers hard knocks to static orthodoxy, and he throws out suggestions for the life and practice of the spirit in the generations to come.

The main tenor of the whole section of this book is a plea for a morality founded upon the rock of faith in God as progressively revealed throughout the ages. Morality he asserts must be founded upon theism and upon a recognition of the divine mystery. He demands that the Christian mythology and ideology be brought up-to-date to counter rival materialist philosophies and philanthropies of to-day; for Christian mysticism is the way of revelation of the moral and spiritual demands of God upon humanity. He acknowledges that Protestant Christianity has given a gift of freedom to the religious personality. But he points a warning finger well when he says that concentration on the hereafter misses the aim of religion which is the perfecting and spiritualising of this life.

> *Le Christianisme a été conçu en regard de la fin prochaine du monde . . . un renversement de la perspection est indispensable* (p. 254).

Our religious education should not be the inculcation of dubious beliefs in the form of dogmas; it should aim rather at the development of a fulness of personality in its freedom, intellectual, aesthetic and above all moral. In such a way we should outgrow the ignorance which regards God as a petty patron directly interested in the miraculous solution of our puny embarrassments; we should, with the mystics, open up for ourselves a course of peace and happiness far superior to the security which economic reformers claim to be able to bring, by material means, as a solution to the world-dissatisfaction of cynical millions of people.

L. S. Collins.

Oriel College, Oxford.

A REVISED COMMUNION SERVICE*

It is now two years since Parliament rejected a Prayer Book Measure which sought to legalise various additions to and deviations from the Prayer Book of 1662. The Measure was substantially the same as one which had been rejected in the previous year. At the time there was much stir and indignation in Church circles; but it seems likely that future generations will be grateful that the revisions of 1927 and 1928 did not receive the sanction of the Legislature. The Bishop of London has recently said that no one wants the revised Communion Service of 1928. Of the 1927 Prayer Book, F. E. Brightman, the eminent liturgiologist wrote, 'As

* *An Alternative Order of Holy Communion.* (Published by Messrs. James Clarke and Co. Ltd. Price 4d. 1938.)

to the Book as a whole I would say . . . that on almost every page of it I find something irritating, something inexact or untidy or superfluous or ill-considered or unreal.'

Parliament rejected the revisions of 1927 and 1928 because they disturbed the balance of doctrinal emphasis reached by the Reformation divines who gave Anglicanism its specific form. The rejection made it clear once for all that the Church of England can only continue to be the National Church if it remains loyal to the general lines laid down at the Reformation. Though it may advance along those lines, it may not go back on them except at the price of forfeiture of its national position.

But the work done in preparation for the abortive revisions of 1927 and 1928 has not been wasted. Though Prayer Book revision has now been in abeyance for some years, the time will come when it will again be a living question. In fact, in many parish churches, perhaps in most parish churches, a good deal of irregular, experimental and unauthorised revision is going on. Frankly, all this involves illegality. It is illegal to omit the Athanasian Creed on days on which the Prayer Book directs it to be recited. It is illegal in the Communion Service to substitute our Lord's two great Commandments for the Decalogue. It is illegal in Morning and Evening Prayer to interpolate unauthorised prayers after the third Collect. But it may be held that during the present transitional period such illegalities ought to be tolerated, provided that they do not infringe the principles on which the rejection of the revisions of 1927 and 1928 was based. At the same time, this kind of sporadic experimental revision is not enough. Before 1928 much systematic work was done on the subject of Prayer Book revision. Its fruits are preserved in such volumes as *The Green Book, The Grey Book,* and *The Orange Book*. But more work now needs to be done. There is much to be said for concentrating on individual Services rather than attempting a more ambitious general revision of the whole Prayer Book, and the defects of previous revisions suggest that the task may more profitably be undertaken by competent individual theologians and liturgiologists than by committees.

Canon R. D. Richardson, Vicar of Harborne, has produced a revised Service of Holy Communion which constitutes a valuable contribution to the subject of Prayer Book revision and demands the attention of all who realise that it is a subject which is by no means dead, though, for the moment, it may be more or less dormant. He has followed the lines of our present Service, and is loyal to its spirit. His revision removes certain linguistic archaisms, and seeks to secure a reality, sincerity and directness of expression which will be helpful to the present day worshipper. It is unquestionable that there is room for revision of this kind. For instance, though communicants may in all earnestness repent them of their sins and be heartily sorry for their misdoings, it is simply not true that most of them feel the burden of them to be intolerable. They ought not to be compelled

to say that it is. If they are, an element of unreality and insincerity is introduced. Canon Richardson amends the Confession accordingly. In his revision Canon Richardson shows himself to be a careful and competent theologian; but throughout, he has ever in mind the ordinary non-theological worshipper. The plain man, unfamiliar with fine theological distinctions, when he hears the words of administration will naturally take the word 'body' to signify his material body, forgetting that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. Canon Richardson surmounts this difficulty by substituting the words of administration used in the Roman Mass, 'preserve thee unto life eternal.' Again, the uninstructed worshipper, when he hears in the Consecration Prayer the words 'a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and *satisfaction,* for the sins of the whole world' is almost bound to think that they involve a doctrine of substitutionary punishment which is flatly contradictory to our Lord's teaching about divine love and justice. The skilled theologian may blame him for doing so, but then it is unreasonable to expect him to be conversant with the subtleties of Pauline Theology. Canon Richardson accordingly omits the phrase.

The most substantial structural revision which Canon Richardson makes is to combine the Prayer of Humble Access with the Prayer of Consecration. His revision here owes something to the revision of 1928, especially in the inclusion of an invocation of the Holy Spirit. But he has not laid himself open to the criticisms which were levelled against the 1928 Epiclesis. His version runs, 'Vouchsafe to pour out now Thy sanctifying and life-giving Spirit; and grant that we, receiving these Thy creatures of Bread and Wine, may be partakers of the most blessed Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.' His Prayer of Thanksgiving and Oblation after the Communion combines the alternative post-Communion prayers of the present Prayer Book and also incorporates part of the Eucharistic Prayer from the *Didache,* the earliest form of such prayer outside the New Testament. This addition is a valuable enrichment of the Service.

The recitation of a creed in public worship has been described as a liturgical afterthought. It was not till about 500 A.D. that this innovation was introduced, and then only locally. The practice did not become at all general till 1000 A.D. Such a creed as the Nicene Creed is a technical theological statement, bristling with difficulties for the layman, and has little or no devotional value. Canon Richardson, however, in this matter, does not go back to primitive custom, but prefers to substitute for the Nicene Creed two alternative Confessions of Faith, one drawn from the Johannine writings, the other a blend of the *Te Deum,* the Nicene Creed, and certain Scriptural phrases. The Johannine Confession of Faith strikes one as the more satisfactory of the two. Its language is familiar to the worshipper and is steeped in the profoundest and most beautiful spirit of devotion.

It is impossible in a review to do full justice to a piece of work, the value of which lies in the combination into a unity of much careful revision in detail. In a Preface Canon Richardson gives utterance to the aspiration that the Church of England may follow in truthfulness and piety, her own standard of worship with its simple, moving grandeur. In his revision of the Communion Service he has clearly been guided throughout by this aspiration. It is of the nature of an eirenicon, and contains nothing which may not be used by all who hold fast to the essentials of the Christian faith, to whatever ecclesiastical party they may belong. In carrying out his task Canon Richardson has emulated the wise scribe who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

G. L. H. Harvey.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

AN ALTERNATIVE ORDER OF HOLY COMMUNION.

Sir,

The Council of the Union at its last meeting passed *nem. con.* the following resolution, and I should be grateful if you would kindly publish it for the information of the members, *viz.*:—

> 'That the Council of the Modern Churchmen's Union commends to the attention of the members of the Union the Alternative Order of Holy Communion drawn up by Canon R. D. Richardson.'

Copies of the Service can be obtained from the publishers, James Clarke & Co., 5 Wardrobe Place, Carter Lane, London, E.C.4. Price 4*d*. (postage extra).

T. J. Wood.

520 Grand Buildings, Trafalgar Square, London, W.C.2.
May 5th, 1938.

THE NEW LECTIONARY OF POST-BIBLICAL PROSE.

Sir,

I gladly avail myself of your kind permission to publish in your columns a further report as to the progress of this work, and would begin by thanking you publicly for your kind encouragement of it, and especially for the generous promise of £20 to open the subsidy fund.

At the kind invitation of the Council of the M.C.U. I attended the annual meeting on May 18th, and explained the scheme to those members who were present, and answered questions upon it. The audience numbered about sixty-five, of whom about half subscribed or promised (between them) there and then a further sum of £38 15*s*. 0*d*., thus providing £58 15*s*. 0*d*. towards the £150 required. I gathered that practically everyone present agreed to purchase a copy of the book when issued, but this, though helpful, does not, of course, directly affect the amount of the preliminary subsidy fund, which is the urgent need. Since the meeting, and as a result of my appeal, I have to date received a further £4 10*s*. 6*d*., making a total of £63 5*s*. 6*d*. This is not at all a bad start, and I wish to express my gratitude for the help, but, as you will see, we still need a good bit more

money before I can go to Messrs. Longmans and ask them to begin printing. I publish below the names of those who have already paid or promised donations, and I sincerely hope that those members of the Union or readers of the *Modern Churchman* who have not as yet subscribed to the fund will speedily do so. The cordial letters which I have received from people since the meeting convince me further that we are engaging in a project for which there is a clear demand.

One or two queries remain to be answered. Some members have asked, 'Why is there a need of a subsidy at all, if the demand is clear?' Others have asked, 'Could not the price be 7/6 instead of 10/6?' I can answer these two questions best by one statement. Messrs. Longmans have pointed out that even a successful venture of this kind will at first only result in the people who are going to use the book buying it (*i.e.* parochial clergy and heads of schools and colleges). It takes a good many of these to buy 1,000 copies. Later no doubt the sale will extend to private individuals, but not at first. If then the book is to be of a substantial character, and suitable for its purpose, the publishers will need some initial help in its production. The costing has been very carefully done, and it does not appear that more satisfactory terms could have been obtained from any other publishing firm. If the price were lowered, it would mean a larger subsidy. If the subsidy were diminished, it would mean a higher price than 10/6. It seems, then, that the best thing we can do is to go ahead with the raising of the remaining £86, and I can only conclude by quoting one of my kind correspondents of last week, who sent his cheque with the words: *'Bis dat qui cito dat.'*

A. C. Bouquet

Gilling House,
Madingley Road, Cambridge.
May 29th, 1938.

List of those who have so far paid or promised donations.

The Rev. H. D. A. Major, D.D., £20; Mrs. Gossage, £10; the Rev. J. K. Nettlefold, £10; the Rev. Canon the Hon. J. G. Adderley, £5; the Rev. J. F. Bethune-Baker, D.D., £2; the Rev. Canon and Mrs. Richardson, £2 2*s.* 0*d.*; A. A. Leaf, Esq., £2 2*s.* 0*d.*; Mrs. Swinburne, £2; Miss E. B. J. Dunn, £1 1*s.* 0*d.*; Miss Dorothy Ward, £2; the Rev. M. T. Dunlop, the Rev. W. Stanhope-Lovell, Miss J. E. Chitty, £1 each; H. Warburton, Esq., £2; the Rev. J. L. Cartwright, 10/6; Miss G. Wild, 10/-.

Further cheques or promises may be sent to me at the above address.

A.C.B.

BURIAL REFORM.

Sir,

In the current issue of the *Modern Churchman* you kindly accord an appreciative review (p. 64) to *Burial Reform and Funeral Costs*, of which I am part author, though I could wish that the review had stressed, as did the authors, the importance of cremation in the public interest.

The principal factor in the increased cost of burial to-day is the cost of the grave. So long as there is room in his parish churchyard an Englishman has the right at common law to be buried therein, the only payments being to the sexton who 'breaks the ground' and the person who reads the service. When the churchyard is full resort must be had to the public cemetery in which a private grave must be bought, as 'common interments' of relations in a grave along with a score of strangers is disliked by all classes. The cost varies in different places and is generally double for persons who have not for some time past been registered as resident

therein; so that a working man or his family, who has arrived recently from, let us say, a distressed area, has to pay, in the hour of greatest need, anything up to £5 5*s.* 0*d.* for a grave for a member of the family, and is often forbidden to erect any but an expensive stone memorial, though wooden memorials were the rule and are still common in many churchyards.

The moral for churchmen is that they should do all in their power to retain churchyards in preference to cemeteries; for social reformers, that cemeteries should be a social and not a trading service, the whole cost being borne not by the individual but by the community, for (except for those cremated) it is a need common to all men.

'Common interments' of a dozen or more bodies in a single grave merely because the relations are too poor to afford to buy a grave should cease: this inexpensive reform would, at a single stroke of the pen of the Minister of Health, remove the most distressing aspect of the pauper burial, the fear of which is ever-present among our poorest. One person in eleven who dies in Greater London is thus buried to-day—to our shame.

ARNOLD WILSON.

House of Commons, London, S.W.1.
May 19th, 1938.

[As an example of the religious objection to cremation we cite the following poster at the present moment exhibited in Oxford in opposition to the proposal to establish a local crematorium :—

CREMATION
is
PAGANISM.
WAR.
EVILS FOLLOW.
Is transgression against God (*Amos* ii).
BURNING GOD'S IMAGE.
ASLEEP — POISON GAS.
Burial Christian Sanitary (*Ezek.* xxxix).

ED., *M.C.*]

THE PRIESTHOOD OF THE LAITY.

SIR,

In the April number of the *Modern Churchman,* under 'Signs of the Times' on p. 11, you say that the Christian ministry is *representative.* 'No Christian minister possesses theoretically any spiritual grace which is not the possession of the Christian community as a whole, and, potentially, of every member of it.'

It is interesting to recall the fact that such was the view of the writers of the Homilies at the time of the Reformation with regard to confession. In my black letter edition, dated 1640, in the second part of the sermon on Repentance, the writer deals with St. James' exhortation, 'Acknowledge your faults one to another,' saying this: 'It may also be thus taken, that we ought to confess our weakness and infirmities, one to another, to the end that knowing each other's faileness, we may the more earnestly pray together unto Almighty God our Heavenly Father, that he will vouchsafe to pardon us our infirmities, for his Sonne Jesus Christ's sake, and not to

impute them for us, when he shall render to every man according to his works. And whereas the adversaries goe about to wrest this place, for to maintain their auricular confession withall, they are greatly deceived themselves, and doe shamefully deceive others: for if this Text ought to be understood of auricular confession: then the Priests are as much bound to confess themselves to the Lay people, as the Lay people are bound to confess themselves to them. And if to pray, is to absolve: then the Laytie by this place hath as great authority to absolve the Priests as the Priests have to absolve the Laytie.'

On the next page, after quoting some strong expressions of St. Augustine against confession, he says: 'I doe not say, but that if any doe finde themselves troubled in conscience, they may repair to their learned Curate or Pastour, or to some other godly learned man, and shew the trouble, and doubt of their conscience to them, that they may receive at their hand the comfortable Salve of God's Word: but it is against the true Christian liberty, that any man should be bound to the numbring of his sinnes, as it hath been used heretofore in the time of blindnesse, and ignorance.'

I have ventured to cite these quotations to show that the writers of the Homilies shared your view that each member of the Church may be regarded in some circumstances as a Christian priest. They certainly thought that 'some other godly learned man' could give the 'Comfortable Salve of God's Word.'

GILBERT COLERIDGE.

Haverfield House, Kew Green, Surrey.
May 14th, 1938.

AN ATTACK ON VON HÜGEL.

SIR,

In the *Modern Churchman* for May 5th, K. M. Clutton writes: 'Von Hügel always managed to keep in with the authorities (no one denounced them more emphatically in private).' That is: Miss Clutton says that Von Hügel was double-faced and false.

For twenty years I sat at von Hügel's feet in the London Society for the Study of Religion. Almost all the other members—Christians of many confessions, Jews and 'Unattached'—may be said to have 'sat at his feet' too; for his personal distinction, his profound and accumulated learning, his genius in sacred things gave to him, even among those picked representatives of religion from the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge, London and from other homes of culture, an astonishing predominance, what might be called almost a spiritual dictatorship.

During those twenty years the Baron spoke his mind with the utmost freedom; sometimes it might be with passion, or it might be sometimes with a delightful humour; always the utterance was spontaneous and fresh; always the thoughts seemed to well up from mystical depths, and we seemed to be allowed to enter for a moment within the precincts of a tremendous personality. Well, during those twenty years I never heard from this great man a single denunciation of the authorities of his Church, nor a single disloyalty to them. He often avowed his own Modernist positions or desires; but he ever spoke of the 'Holy Father' with filial devotion, and, though he wished for reforms in Roman Catholicism, he was, in avowal and in habit, clingingly, pathetically, dutifully, unflinchingly a Roman Catholic.

On the Baron's death, in 1925, M. Loisy wrote: 'Tous ceux qui l'ont connu garderont le souvenir de sa bonté, de sa loyauté, de sa sainteté.'

The London Society for the Study of Religion, a body of men whose rectitude is beyond the reach of hostility, on his death unanimously passed the following resolution, February 3rd, 1925:

> 'The London Society for the Study of Religion records its grief on the death of its greatest member, Baron Fr. von Hügel, who from the first inspired and adorned its meetings by his religious and philosophic genius and by the Christian graces of his character; the Society further affirms that it will hold the Baron's name in affectionate, grateful, and reverent remembrance.'

HUBERT HANDLEY.

Golders Green, N.W.
May, 1938.

THE VACUUM.

SIR,

The April number of the *Modern Churchman* which, owing to my living in East Africa, has only just reached me, contains an interesting article by the Rev. J. C. Hardwick entitled 'The Vacuum.' Someone else, and one more competent than I, may have already followed it up with comments similar to those which I am venturing to make in this letter, but if the subject has not been raised in correspondence already, I should be grateful if you will allow me space in the June number of the *Modern Churchman*.

It seemed to me as I read Mr. Hardwick's article that he was leading up to a plea for the recognition by Modernists of the Oxford Group Movement. The description of the 'wanted' religion which he makes on p. 31 is surely that which the leaders of the movement might give of the Groups, and might very well have served as an introduction to their recent publication, *Rising Tide*:

> 'The masses want *beliefs* and slogans. Something to give a real meaning to life; something to march to, an objective; something that can speak with the sound of a trumpet. A religion to set the crowds shouting, the troops marching. A religion to make the guns go off; a religion to make the little man feel big. That is the stuff people want if the vacuum is to be filled!'

And yet the article concludes without any mention of the Groups and one is left with the alternatives: either Mr. Hardwick had the Oxford Groups in mind but refrained from making a direct reference to them, or else he does not consider them worth taking into serious consideration.

I have been a humble member of the M.C.U. for nearly ten years now, and until recently I have taken the somewhat superior or contemptuous attitude towards the Groups which I fancy many Modernists adopt. I have had greater sympathy for Miss Marjorie Harrison's *Saints Run Mad* than for pro-Group literature. Now, however, while not forgetting the debt I owe to English Modernism in helping me to a balanced and rational religious outlook, I have recently had cause to be grateful to the Oxford Group Movement for giving me fresh inspiration and the means of making my ministry far more effective.

The endeavour to put Group principles into practice, even if I have constantly failed, the facing up to the 'Four Absolutes' in personal life, and the surrendering of wrong and self-centred attitudes have had this result, while, although I have so far been unable to take much share in the corporate life of the movement, I have seen in other people the wonderful liberating power of the Group message and the enthusiasm for God which it engenders. In short, in the fellowship of the Groups I have seen some-

thing of the dynamic Christianity for which Mr. Hardwick pleads, a force which could achieve for Christ what Fascism and Communism are achieving for themselves in the areas they have captured.

At the same time, I do not close my eyes to the crudities which, lying on the surface, invite the criticism which has been levelled against the Groups; and the disregard, sometimes amounting to disdain, of an intellectual interest in religion cannot be denied. But are not these weaknesses often due to the enthusiasm of new converts to religion denied the help and guidance of those who have had a longer and perhaps deeper religious experience? As Mr. Hardwick says: '. . . a religion which is alive creates its own theology . . . What we need to-day is a religion, one to rival the materialistic cults which seem so omnipotent. The theologies will follow soon enough.' Could not we, by surrendering the reserve which we often unnecessarily maintain and possibly our dislike of some aspects of the Groups' teaching, join forces with a movement which undoubtedly possesses vitality and power, and so help it to create a true theology, while at the same time prove that Modernism, far from being a 'speculative creed with no blood in its veins,' has a live gospel for the modern world?

R. G. HEAWOOD.

The Chaplaincy, Kampala, Uganda.
May 16th, 1938.

MR. HARDWICK'S REPLY.

SIR,

I have no first-hand knowledge of the Groups, but by what I hear and read of them I feel they have got hold of something important — that is to say, a new technique of 'liberating' the individual from the prison of his individuality. The Group method, if I understand it rightly, is not new, but old. It was that of the primitive Christian communities ('Where two or three are gathered together . . .' etc.), as also of the first Methodist Societies. The Groups seem able to generate among their members what I was asking for in my article, a religion of present experience. The Groups as experimenters in religious technique deserve to be encouraged. I do not at all mind crudities; what I object to is polish, refinement and formalism in religion, and conventional Anglicanism is full of these handicaps to worship. Good luck to the Groups is what I say. If they have anything in them they will produce a theology; their anti-intellectualism is only a counterblast to the finicky dogmatism of the traditionalists and to the academic pedantry of the modernists.

J. C. HARDWICK.

A MODERN CRUSADE.

SIR,

The article in the May number on 'A Modern Crusade' has set me too thinking.

I have been a reader of the *Modern Churchman* almost since its first appearance and a life member of the Union for some twenty years, and frankly I am disappointed that so little has been accomplished. It seems to me that there is talking enough and writing enough, but what we want is to *do* something. As Mr. Horan says, we need a 'big forward move,' but we need that specially in some *practical* work of love and renunciation so that young men and women who are seeking guidance can see the faith that is in us and be drawn to share it. We should be known by our fruits.

Let me suggest the kind of thing we might undertake. I have lately come from Nigeria. In a population of under twenty millions, experts calculate there are over one million lepers. In some villages the incidence is as high as thirty per cent., in practically none lower than two per cent. The situation is probably just as bad in India. In the British Empire there are at the very lowest computation two million persons suffering from the long-drawn agonies, mental and physical, of this most revolting disease. Is it not a burning shame that this is so while Church-people live comfortably and indulge in new organs, stained glass windows and all the rest of it?

Supposing we Modern Church men and women were to say to the world, 'We have been reading the Gospels and have discovered that Jesus did not only say, "Do this in remembrance of me,"' a command which may be so easy and cheap and soothing to fulfil, but taught us quite as emphatically to cleanse the lepers, which is difficult and expensive and disturbing? It can be done. The Panama Canal zone was cleansed of yellow fever and malaria because commercial interests were at stake. Leprosy, tuberculosis, drunkenness, poverty and misery are not cleansed from the world, because only mere Christianity seems to be at stake, and we don't believe in it with such conviction as we believe in big dividends.

Every big cause in our own country is controversial and not absolutely unselfish, because it benefits ourselves. There could be no controversy about the righteousness of undertaking to abolish leprosy from among the native races of our Dominions for whose welfare we are responsible and of whose multifarious suffering we are in so high a degree guilty.

In any case, whatever it be, let us *do* something.

LILIAN M. RUSSELL.

Strone, by Dunoon, Argyll.
May 25th, 1938.

MR. HORAN'S REPLY.

SIR,

I am glad that my appeal for a forward movement in the cause of religious liberalism and a modern presentation of the Christian Faith should have impressed Mrs. Russell. Work among lepers is not the *purpose* of the M.C.U., although M.C.U. members may very rightly be called to minister to them and should obey the Call. Your correspondent's letter seems rather to imply that Modernists are sitting with hands folded and doing nothing. M.C.U. members are doing all sorts of things for the cause of Christ, in one way or another; they don't spend all their time contemplating the ideals of the M.C.U. They are already, most of them, hard at work *doing* things in their churches, their parishes, or in schools and colleges, or in home and foreign missionary societies.

In all these activities they take their part with others of different schools of thought. We must not confuse the issue. My article was not intended to deal with Christian work in any *special* direction — this must be left to the individual. It was rather intended as a call to share more widely with others, in a general way, and in the ordinary contacts of life, the *teaching* and the *principles* of Modernism, which we have found of immense help and value to our own religious faith, and which, it seems to me, the world is hungering for at the present time.

F. S. HORAN.

Kingston Vicarage, Corfe Castle, Dorset.
May 31st, 1938.

SIR,

I have read with much interest and pleasure Mr. Horan's stirring appeal for a Modernist Crusade. As one who has watched with sympathy for some forty years the growth of English Modernism, I fully agree that the time is now ripe for a vigorous and courageous forward movement.

I suggest that those in favour of this should draw up definite plans of action in readiness for the forthcoming Loughborough Conference, at which they might be discussed with a view to settling a practical and practicable programme. May I commend this suggestion to the consideration of the Council of the M.C.U., as well as to Mr. Horan and those who share his admirable enthusiasm?

R. G. BURY.

[We are sure that the Committee of the Loughborough Modern Churchmen's Conference would gladly arrange for afternoon meetings for the discussion of the themes suggested by our correspondent if any members of the Conference desire such meetings.—ED., *M.C.*]

THE ATONEMENT AND HELL.

SIR,

A study of the history of the various doctrines of Atonement is illuminating, but I do not think that their connection with the doctrine of hell has been recognised.

For the first two hundred years Christians seem to have got on very well without any formulated doctrine of the Atonement, and perhaps it had been better if none such had ever been put forth. Irenaeus was the first to set forth a doctrinal theory of the Atonement. His theory was, that man through sin had come under the power of the devil; but the devil made a bargain with God that he would free man if God gave His Son to die on the Cross. Now, putting aside the absurd idea of a bargain between God and the devil, Irenaeus was right in asserting that Christ came and died to free man from sin, or the devil as he put it. There does not seem to have been any other doctrine of Atonement for the next thousand years. But then came a fundamental change. It was taught that Christ came and died not to save man from sin, as taught in Holy Scripture, but to save man from hell fire, either by appeasing God's anger, paying our debt to God, satisfying God's justice, or God's law, or in other ways, all of which doctrines are a gross outrage on all that Christ has taught us of the nature and character of God.

How can we account for this fundamental change in the presentation of the Gospel? I suggest that the doctrine of hell, which was the dominant doctrine in the Church in the middle ages, was the cause. Hell was a place where the majority of people were doomed to never-ending torment in flames of fire. This dominant doctrine was always before the eyes of the people in crude pictures of the doom of the damned on the walls of their churches, some of which survive to-day. Christians actually believed that hell-fire is the best that our Heavenly Father can do for the majority of His children. But, believing this, it is little wonder that they were willing to believe any doctrine of Atonement which promised them salvation from such a fate, however absurd and unscriptural such doctrine might be; like a drowning man they would clutch at any straw. We must remember too that the laity had been trained for generations to accept without thought or question whatever the Church taught—

Theirs not to think at all,
Theirs but to swallow all.

Beccles. R. A. HITCHCOCK.